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EMPOWERING SAILORS

THIS MONTH

APRIL 2015

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YACHTS & YACHTING

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PHOTO: TOM GAULT

Heroes up close

There's a buzz lingering in the air as I write this, recently returned from a great weekend at the Dinghy Show. With advance ticket sales up, exhibitors and visitors alike reported a very positive weekend.

It was also a brilliant opportunity for the Y&Y magazine team to meet so many of our readers and to take your feedback on board.

On one particular topic there's a real consensus. Despite the advent of the digital age, the mag's unique Clubs & Classes section remains enduringly popular, which led us to ponder why.

Ultimately, I think the reason for this relates in many ways to the nature of our sport. Recognition of success in print is of course gratifying, no matter at what level you're competing, but one of sailing's oft-cited positives is the many events where weekend warriors can pitch their skills against the champions of our sport. This spirit is very much encapsulated by the Dinghy Show, with sailors young and old rubbing shoulders with their Olympic and America's Cup heroes throughout the weekend. What better way to inspire?

On the Y&Y stand, we were delighted to welcome Nick Thompson, four time Laser world champion, who stopped by to impart

some pearls of wisdom to our readers – watch the video at yachtsandyachting.co.uk

Meanwhile, far far away from Ally Pally, the weekend's excitement became two-fold, as the gripping conclusion of the fourth leg of the Volvo Ocean Race played out in Auckland – see next issue for our full and exclusive analysis. In the meantime, it's also interesting to discover a whole new generation of heroes that are emerging as a result of this race, with our special report on the Sanya stopover on page 32.

The one event that's certain to unite club sailors and champions alike – and indeed, sailing newbies, with a new bring-a-friend concept introduced for 2015 – is Bart's Bash II. The launch for the venue sign up took place at the show, with the aim this year being to make it the biggest sporting event in the world. I for one can't wait!

Georgie

Georgie Corlett-Pitt,
Editor



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Writers this month include...



Britain's medal-winning 470 crew from the 2012 Olympics, Stuart Bithell is well-placed to impart winning advice for up-and-coming crews



Musto Skiff sailor Andy Rice has an unparalleled knowledge of the dinghy racing scene, from grass roots to Olympic level



Ed Gorman is a former sailing correspondent for The Times and has long been a passionate supporter of solo ocean racing



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ETNZ drops Barker for AC35

Dean Barker has been dropped from the sailing squad of Emirates Team New Zealand as the team is forced to face up to financial pressures heading towards the 35th America's Cup in Bermuda.

The announcement on 26 February came one week after the story was leaked to the New Zealand national press, where Barker claims he first heard about the move. "Well, unfortunately last week through a leak to the media I found out that I had been dumped as the sailing director of Team New Zealand and today I found out that was the case," commented an almost tearful Barker on New Zealand TV.

Barker has, instead been offered a coaching role, which Grant Dalton, the team's managing director, says is essential. "Oracle Racing was able to improve in San Francisco in part because of a brains trust that was able to watch us, understand what we were doing better, and in many cases improve it," he responded in a separate interview. "That is a role Dean

would be perfect for and that is the role he has been offered."

Clearly this is a view Barker does not share and says the position he can best serve the team as a sailor is being part of the sailing team.

For some it had seemed obvious Barker would struggle to hold on to his position as skipper following the hiring by the team of high-performance wonderkid, Pete Burling.

But to be bumped from the sailing team altogether is a surprise and brings into sharp focus more significant worries for the team.

"The world changed for us when Bermuda was announced as the venue for the next America's cup," explains Dalton. "We have had to have our budget cut. Until that time we had been looking at three boats, two test platforms and a new 62-footer.

"Dean's role was going to be developing but at that point we said we can't build three we can only have two so then last week we put the offer to Dean going forwards."

VOR final day thriller

Stand-in skipper, Xabi Fernandez steered *Mapfre* to an impressive victory in leg four of the Volvo Ocean Race into Auckland.

Fernandez was skippering the boat in the absence of long-term sailing partner Iker Martinez who has been due to miss a number of legs owing to his Olympic sailing commitments.

For the best part of two days, the Spanish boat had been in a tussle with Abu Dhabi and Dongfeng for the honour of winning the 5,264nm leg four from Sanya to the 'City of Sails'.

In the end, they pipped Ian Walker's Abu Dhabi crew by four minutes 25 seconds, with the Chinese boat, in turn, hot on the Emirates boat's heels in a showdown to the wire for second. Ian Walker later pointed out that the boats were closer than the in-port race finish in China.

Abu Dhabi now leads the overall table but is on equal points with Dongfeng Race Team, while three teams are fighting hard for the bottom step of the podium.



PHOTO: VOLVO OCEAN RACE

RORC posts race record

The course record for the RORC Caribbean 600 has fallen as Lloyd Thornburg's MOD70, *Phaedo3* blasted across the finish line in 1 day, 9 hours, 35 minutes and 30 seconds.

The team beat the record, set during the inaugural 600-mile lap of the Caribbean islands set by Claude Thelie and John Burnie's ORMA 60, *Region Guadeloupe* by an impressive six hours 35 minutes and 35 seconds.

During the opening stages of the race, it looked as though the monohull course record might also fall to the newly launched *Rambler 88*. However this was not to be as George David's team struggled on a tight reach towards Guadeloupe. David holds the record anyway, which he previously set on *Rambler 100*, but he did not seem to be too disappointed to miss out. "*Rambler 88* is probably faster

on every point of sail than the previous *Rambler*, but the weather really didn't work for us this year," he said after the finish. "[She] is an exciting boat to race, powerful and really wet on deck."

Meanwhile away from the records, it was third time lucky for Hap Fauth's American JV72 *Bella Mente* who won the race on handicap. The Maxi 72 has finished second overall for the past two years and this year was so nearly a disaster too: "Friday, before the race start, we had a structural problem with the boat and limped home from practice to assess the problem," Fauth says. "We took the boat apart and for two days the shore team set up a temporary boat building workshop and did a great job just to get us to the start line."

"Throughout the race we had no problems at all and my hat goes off to our ground crew."



PHOTO: TIM WRIGHT/PHOTOACTION

This season's hottest ticket

This summer's must-have tickets for The America's Cup World Series, Portsmouth (ACWSUK) officially went on sale on Monday 2 March.

Up to 500,000 visitors are expected to attend the four-day spectacular (23-26 July 2015) providing the opportunity to watch the world's best sailors battling it out on high speed AC45 foiling catamarans. The spectator experience will cater for all tastes with both paid ticket and free-to-view options.

Paid tickets will provide access to the official event 'Fanzone Arena', providing an 'immersive' America's Cup experience, while enjoying prime views of the racecourse and access to exclusive event entertainment.

The free-to-view area will be located on Southsea Common, to be named the Waterfront Festival Arena, where only pre-registered ticket holders will gain access.

Tickets are available through ticketmaster.co.uk/ACWSportsmouth

They said...

"I am gutted by the way I have been treated by Team New Zealand and the management during this process. If that was the offer on the table last year I would not have rejoined the team."

Dean Barker is less than impressed with his new job offer from Team New Zealand

"Absolutely [Dean] knew there would be change. We have been discussing a potential move since November."

Grant Dalton sees things rather differently

"I drew a big eye [on the mast], looking down on the boat, and then I wrote 'one world, one strength'. If the crew works together as one they will have more strength and they will prosper in the race."

Miss World, Rolene Strauss, gives her top tips for winning in the Volvo Ocean Race

"If a boat is within the AIS range Pascal makes sure that he or one of the crew is sitting at the desk with the microphone in hand, relaying bearing and speed to the trimmers and driver on deck. Every five seconds."

Sam Greenfield describes the exhausting use of AIS (which allows teams to see information about competitors within 8 miles) in the Volvo Ocean Race

"Another ripping day on our new #AC45. Hit 45.8 knots today in 17 knots. Have a feeling we are going to go well over 50 in the next #americascup #oracleteamusa"

Kyle Langford seems to be enjoying training on Oracle Team USA's new foiling AC45

"I changed my cereal. Someone told me Weetabix and bananas were the way forward so I had Weetabix for breakfast and had a banana just before going out. I had a shave too, so I am not sure what it is really: cereal, banana or shave."

Michael Coxon of Thurlow Fisher Lawyers explains how his team beat the, until then, unbeaten Gotta Love it 7 in race five of the 18ft Skiff JJ Giltinan Trophy

"I'm absolutely delighted. I'm not sure the winner has ever been a cat before so that is ground-breaking stuff and I'm pleased that the cat has come of age. I've preached the cat word forever, for 20 or 30 years, and the last few years since the America's Cup and having the Nacra 17 in the Olympics mean it's all come of age... at last!"

Grant Piggot was a happy man after his design, the Nacra F20 FCS won the Concours d'Elégance at the RYA Suzuki Dinghy Show

"Being an empirical system, the PY [Portsmouth Yardstick] is not able to fully cater for the nuances of each club's fleets, sailors and boats which are squeezed together into a national average for each class."

Bas Edmonds, RYA technical and racing services manager reiterates the RYA's encouragement for clubs to adjust PY handicaps for their own use as the 2015 numbers are revealed

"Ben Ainslie's base was amazing. I can't believe it's been built that quickly. It doesn't seem like a year ago that he was in Downing Street with some pictures and some ideas that the government should help fund and I think it's remarkable how fast it's gone."

PM, David Cameron, is impressed by Ben Ainslie Racing's progress in Portsmouth

"I am getting ready to start training for Bart's Bash this year. I know Ben Ainslie and Iain Percy are training hard as well because they are not happy that I beat them in last year's Bart's Bash."

Oracle Team USA skipper Jimmy Spithill starts the pre-event fighting talk early for 2015's biggest event



PHOTO: EMIRATES TEAM NEW ZEALAND

In brief

■ **Team Alvmedica** has launched a global children's heart health charity push.

■ **Crewsaver** has announced a partnership with Warsash Sailing Club, organisers of the Brooks Macdonald Warsash Spring Series.

■ The first-ever RS Aero Nationals has been renamed **National Championship and International Open**, thanks to the donation of charter boats for overseas sailors.



PHOTO: RS SAILING

■ The RYA has released its annual list of **Portsmouth Yardstick handicap numbers**. Let the dinghy park arguments commence...

■ Calshot Activity Centre is to host the **Sailing Forum** on Friday 22 May, bringing together forward thinkers in sailing, and those who are passionate about the future of the sport.

■ Venue sign-up has opened for the second **Bart's Bash**, due to take place on Sunday 20 September.

■ The first **Elvstrøm UK** Authorised Dealer has been announced as Nickys Canvasworks and Sail Clinic, based in Brighton Marina.

■ Fed Week is to be renamed **Chichester Harbour Race Week** for this year's 52nd edition of the August regatta.

■ **Brightlingsea Sailing Club** has been awarded the RYA's Club of the Year at the RYA Suzuki Dinghy Show.

■ The **RS200 class association** has voted to update the sailplan and deck moulding. The new sails will be available from May.

■ The **Andrew Simpson Sailing Foundation** has awarded the National Schools Sailing Association a grant of £23,000.

■ Chilgrove Gin has been named the official gin partners of **Cowes Week 2015**.

■ Sunsail is to become the official sailing partner and event sponsor of the Associated British Ports (ABP) **Southampton Half Marathon**, to be held on 26 April 2015.

'Bev' Moss

With the news of the untimely death of Beverley 'Bev' Moss, the world of dinghy racing has become something of a quieter place, as his ready smile and wonderful and never-ending supply of jokes have now been lost, *writes David Henshall*.

As a teenager it looked as if he might become a cricketer, but instead it would be dinghy racing that claimed his attentions. After starting out in Merlin Rockets, Bev was given a chance to crew in a 505, which he immediately knew was what he wanted to do. Although a reasonable helm, Bev focused his efforts on perfecting the role of crew in a high-performance boat, first in the 505, before moving up to the FD. Despite his skills, he was considered too light for the Dutchman and returned to the 505, where he enjoyed a long and successful career. In later life he moved into race management and was on the team at the 505 and Laser Worlds, then at the Olympic

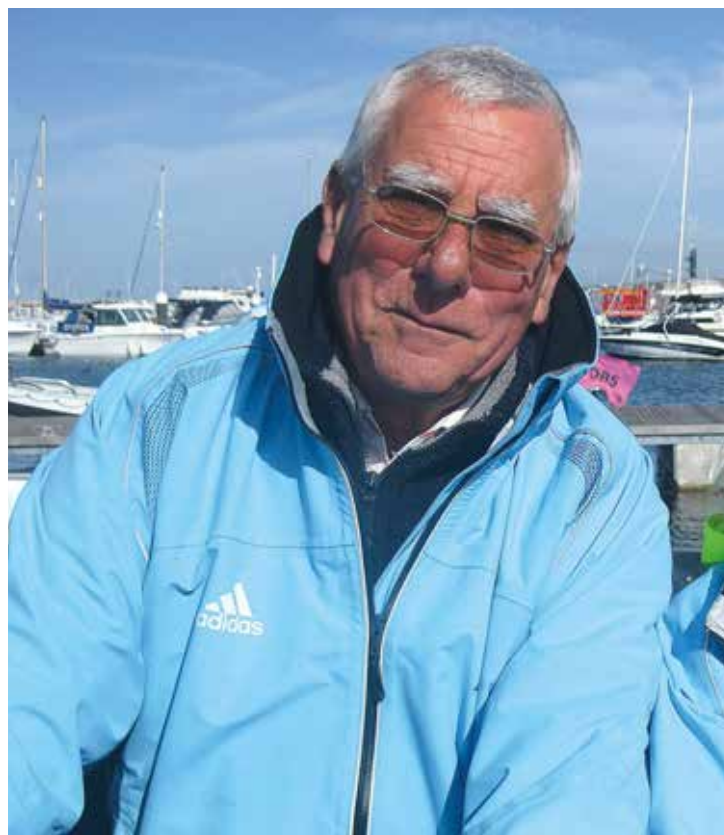


PHOTO: THAMCOCK DURANT

Regatta at Weymouth in 2012. Our sympathies go to Sue, Tracy and all the family.

Bev Moss: top crew and top man, ashore and afloat September 1941-February 2015.

Dinghy Show success

The event many see as the marker for the start of the UK season, the RYA Suzuki Dinghy Show in association with Yachts & Yachting proved a roaring success in its traditional location of Alexandra Palace, North London.

As ever the event was awash with new kit and new boats as well as old friends meeting up before the season gets into full swing.

Attendance figures were impressive with some 9,500 visitors to the site and a 20 per cent increase in pre-sold tickets.

As usual, a number of awards and celebrations took place, including the RYA Regional Youth Champion Awards (*pictured*).

For information about the RYA Suzuki Dinghy Show go to yachtsandyachting.co.uk



PHOTO: RYA

Great reading

This month, our sister title *Sailing Today* looks at innovative antifouls, reviews the Rustler 37 and gets to grips with the art of drying out against a harbour wall. Meanwhile *Classic Boat* concludes its look at the rise of the bermudan rig, goes cruising in wooden boat heaven in Maine, USA and brings you its annual events guide.





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DREAMS DESTROYED

With Paralympic sailing removed from the 2020 programme, **Toby Heppell** investigates its future

The International Paralympic Committee (IPC) announced the final tranche of sporting events to be included in the 2020 Paralympic Games in Japan on 31 January 2015, significantly missing sailing from that list.

Sailing was first introduced to the Paralympics as a demonstration sport in 1996 and has seen an increase in classes from one initially, to two in 2000 and three from 2008 onwards. And at the London 2012 Paralympic Games the event drew the highest number of Paralympic sailors ever.

Significantly, however, the number of nations attending the regatta has

hovered at much the same level, from 22 nations in 2000 to 23 nations in 2012 - statistics the IPC will see as a significant indicator of the sport's global reach.

Paralympic sailing for much of this time has fallen under the remit of the International Association for Disabled Sailing (IFDS). But in November 2014 a merger had brought disabled sailing firmly into the ISAF camp.

With reference to the decision by IPC, IFDS stated that it "responded in a timely and comprehensive manner to queries from IPC, with details of sailors that participate regularly in international regattas or national championships, on Paralympic boats".

A few weeks after the decision was announced, though, a pdf copy of what appeared to be the result of IFDS's presentation to IPC surfaced, which did not make for easy reading. The document contains a number of seemingly basic omissions in terms of data provided by IFDS regarding the global reach of the sport and concludes: 'Quality of the application: Generally poor with very little information provided, claims not backed up by data, some questions not answered.'

10 days after this, a response came from Bernard Destrubé at the

IFDS stating that this was a first draft of the submission and that the federation had since gone back to the IPC. "IPC had requested all international federations to answer a comprehensive, complex questionnaire, which a small working group within IFDS produced by the 28 July 2014 deadline," he stated. "Most of the items of this initial document came back flagged orange or red [indicating moderate or significant concern respectively], as can be seen on the pdf document that is circulating. IPC was insufficiently explicit in describing their expectancies, and the general nature of the answers lacked appropriate examples and irrefutable data. Both the completed questionnaire, and IPC's response were preliminary working documents and it is both misplaced and destructive to criticise IFDS based on these documents!"

Within that communication Destrubé goes on to explain where sailing remained unfeasible (in the eyes of the IPC) for inclusion in the Paralympic Games going forward. Four areas remained of concern including rules and regulations, finances, quadrennial competition programme and worldwide reach.

On this final point Destrubé told

ABOVE Helena Lucas won Britain's first Paralympic gold in sailing in 2012

BELOW The IPC view all three classes as 'individual sports'



“Four areas remained of concern including worldwide reach”



Y&Y that: “At first we submitted figures to the IPC that included a broader range of classes but they will only accept figures in the three Paralympic classes [the IPC requires sports to be currently practiced in 32 countries or more for inclusion]. We also tried to explain that in the case of the Skud 18 and the Sonar they are team sports and should be judged as such [where the criteria for inclusion is a mere 14 countries] but [IPC] take the view they are not.”

Renowned disabled sailing activist and one of those responsible for getting sailing into the Paralympics in 1996, Geoff Holt, believes this is unacceptable and seems unconvinced by the answers provided by IFDS. In correspondence with Destrubé he calls upon IFDS to prove they are not at fault with documentary evidence and adds: “I believe there are two separate issues here, 1) to get IPC to reconsider their decision and 2) to conduct a post-mortem into what went wrong.

“I am working hard on the first with some very influential people trying to get IPC to reconsider – albeit late, ISAF are also trying to get [national federations] to conduct urgent surveys into global participation to hopefully demonstrate to IPC we are worthy to keep our place in the Games.

“The post-mortem is already under way at every level, certainly at

grass roots level as is evident from the massive outpouring of anger on the internet and in the press. But conducting a post-mortem is not simply a matter of attributing blame: firstly establishing precisely what went wrong is a necessary precursor to presenting the most effective case possible for sailing’s reinstatement and secondly it is necessary to ensure the establishment of systems within the IFDS to ensure such a disastrous turn of events does not befall Paralympic sailing again.”

Going forwards

Despite some quarters holding out early hope that sailing might still be reinstated to the roster of sports for 2020, it would seem this is not a likely option, the IPC stating that: “The IPC Governing Board is willing to reward robust athlete participation and good sport governance. Herein lies an opportunity for sailing to regroup, reform, rejuvenate and return with an improved proposition when we [IPC] launch the next review cycle in 2018.”

Asked if Paralympic sailing stands no chance of being reinstated for 2020, Destrubé’s answer is mildly evasive but ultimately telling. “That would be a statement I would find it hard to disagree with,” he comments.

Destrubé remains adamant that the only reason for Paralympic exclusion



PHOTOS: RICHARD LANGDON/OCEAN IMAGES

is not fulfilling the IPC 32 country criteria. He is hopeful that with ISAF’s full backing – both in terms of personnel and financial – Paralympic sailing can be grown, particularly in sailing’s developing nations in the east.

But if sailing remains out of the Paralympics in 2020, there will be little funding for established teams, let alone those teams within developing nations.

Perhaps now is the time for a classes rethink with the aim of making Paralympic sailing as accessible as possible for wider numbers. As Holt says: “It is the grass roots sailors who underpin our sport. It is they who aspire to represent their country and reach Paralympic level.”

ABOVE The Skud 18 made its debut at the 2008 Paralympics

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Bob Fisher

From keelboat handicaps to the future of the America's Cup qualifiers, the Fish shares his view

A recently received press release that more than caught my eye was all about racing assorted small keelboats, and it came from Tom Jobling, the author of one of the nicest sailing books I have read in years: *Chasing Shadows*. The release concerned the Northern Ireland Keelboat Racing Association; an organisation that, far from burdening a local handicapper at its four major 'away' regattas, the 'Super Sundays', has chosen the RYA National Handicap for Cruisers (NHC) system, and has had a season without complaint.

It works for the NIKRA across a wide range of boats from Sonatas to 28fters and, according to Robin Gray, their national race officer: "It has worked a treat for us." One wonders therefore how it might improve the handicapping of events like the J.P. Morgan Asset Management Round the Island Race. It is too late now for that this year as the notice of race has already been published for June's event, and while it might cause a considerable amount of work, it could be beneficial for its originators to calculate separately all the finishers in the relevant handicap classes using the NHC system. But what a bonus for the RYA's scheme it would be. One hopes the NHC will go 'national' as the acronym indicates.

Many will have noticed just how far behind the next America's Cup organisation is running. It took 15 months to decide a venue for the Cup racing; now another crucial decision has been delayed until mid-March – just where to hold the AC Qualifiers. This is a contentious matter as all the challenging teams must attend and ACEA, the event authority, has made noises that it will be in the Southern Hemisphere, nothing more, but that has



One of the biggest names in yachting journalism, Bob Fisher has a passion and depth of knowledge that's second to none

incensed the majority of the teams that have declared. Four of them are in Europe – Luna Rossa, Artemis, BAR and Team France – which leaves only Emirates Team New Zealand smiling. The majority face double shipping costs for one regatta.

The Europeans will have to mode their boats for this one-off regatta to meet with

might bring. OTUSA would also gain from the hassle it causes the Challengers. And running to form, there will be no alternative considered; even the Kiwis will be faced with the costs of double transportation and the follow-on, the Challengers' Play Offs (formerly the Louis Vuitton Cup), will be held at the site of the Cup.

The passing of the Louis Vuitton Cup has not gone unmarked after 30 years, sad though it was. No longer is Bruno Troublé an integral part of the Cup scene. At the end it was very different to the beginning, in 1983, when LV contacted the newspaper for which I was writing to ask its sports department to notify me the races being held in Newport, RI, where I was based, might carry the sponsor's name (please!). Such pleasantry was never forgotten.

Will we be reduced to calling the event immediately prior to the Cup match, the 'Challenger Selection Trials'? Here is one ripe enough to make a suggestion that I have run past Bruno: a trophy is presented for the event, preferably to be named the 'Yves Carcelle Trophy', in memory of the late chairman of Louis Vuitton who devoted so much time to the Cup, much loved in the Cup community and who died shortly after AC34.

The event must, this time round at least, be organised by ACEA – but in future the Cup series is to be a separate feature. The reward for winning is to be the

right to challenge for the Cup with costs of organisation burdened only with the cost of re-engraving the trophy each time. Soon it will generate the opportunity, for a sponsor to become associated with the Yves Carcelle Trophy and reap the benefits of the chances to put its name with that of the trophy and pay for some hospitality occasions. Then the Challengers' event would be back on track. □

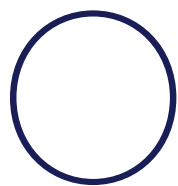
The only plus for holding AC Qualifiers away from Bermuda is the extra amount of publicity it might bring to the Cup

the conditions that will be different from those in Bermuda where the other races of the Challenger series will be held. They point to the fact ETNZ will have to get its boat up to speed in Bermuda, so why not hold the AC Qualifiers regatta there? The shipping will cut into the 160 days that the AC62s are allowed to be sailed.

The only plus for holding AC Qualifiers away from Bermuda is the extra publicity it

Andy Rice

A closer look at the world championship that turned heads for more than one reason this winter



Outside of the Olympic classes, can you think of a world championship that's tougher to win than the International Moth? I'm beginning to wonder

if it's actually harder to win than some Olympic classes. The recent Worlds was dominated by Pete Burling who prevented Nathan Outteridge from defending the crown that he had won just six months earlier at Hayling Island. I watched Nathan win a 49er worlds seven years ago on the same waters at Sorrento, at the opposite end of Port Phillip Bay from Melbourne in Australia. That was Nathan's first major victory in an Olympic class that he has since gone on to dominate. Except not lately.

Since Nathan and his fellow Aussie, Iain 'Goobs' Jensen, won Olympic gold in the 49er at London 2012, the silver medallist from New Zealand has been chipping away at Nathan's reputation as the undisputed king of high performance sailing. Together with his crew Blair Tuke, Pete has gone undefeated in the 49er since London 2012. Nathan and Goobs owned the last Olympic cycle. Pete and Blair own this one, and are now in a class of their own in the doublehanded skiff.

Pete has struggled to match Nathan's prowess in the Moth. The big Kiwi has showed promise, but not on the world stage. At a light-airs worlds in Hawaii a couple of years ago, big Pete was struggling to get his boat out of the water as Nathan was out front battling for the title with American Bora Gulari, who eventually prevailed.

We didn't see Pete at the Hayling Worlds, but on previous form he would have struggled in the light breezes of that week. But at Sorrento he was unstoppable in the big breeze. Nine wins out of 14 races speaks of a dominant performance, although Simon Payne, a double world champion who was watching from the sidelines in Australia,



Musto Skiff sailor Andy Rice has unparalleled knowledge of the dinghy sailing scene, from grassroots to Olympic level

says the scoreline is perhaps a bit unfair to Nathan. There was one controversial race in marginal foiling conditions where most of the fleet got timed out – Nathan included – while Pete was one of the lucky few to get a finish inside the time limit.

The race committee took a good deal

job or not? Or put safety first, hold the fleet ashore, but risk the wrath of the top sailors who want to find a worthy world champion? An impossible compromise.

Even if they didn't get all their races in, few would dispute that Pete Burling was the outstanding performer at Sorrento. Nathan will have to wait another year-and-a-half for a chance at revenge, in Japan.

Of course, other sailors might have something to say about who's going to win the next worlds. Josh McKnight from Australia won in 2012 and has since finished in third at the last two championships. Or maybe it's time for the Brits to step up and reclaim a title that last went to GB when Simon Payne won in Dubai 2010.

Chris Rashley ran Nathan close for the title in Hayling last year, with his fourth place in Sorrento perhaps even more impressive. The Stokes Bay sailor managed to complete the series despite collapsing on the ground a few days earlier with severe disc problems in his back. He also defied the critics who said he was only any good in light winds, going on to win the windiest heat of the regatta. Chris Draper has seen a leap in performance since Hayling, and

went on to place fifth at Sorrento with some very good speed in the light and good enough in the breeze. Pete Burling was using a Mach 2 package, which has now won seven straight world titles, which must make it the most successful design in the long

history of this development class. But the British designed and built Exocet has been knocking on the door of greatness for some time and threatens to topple the Mach 2.

For context, here are some other final placings from Sorrento: 30th Tom Slingsby (Laser gold medallist, London 2012); 31st Dean Barker (Skipper, Emirates Team New Zealand); 32nd Paul Goodison (Laser gold medallist, Beijing 2008); 96th Freddy Loof (Star gold medallist, London 2012).

“With 160 boats of wildly varying competence, where do you decide to draw the line?”

of heat for some of their decisions, but managing a Moth championship must be one of the toughest gigs in the sport. With 160 boats of wildly varying competence, where do you decide to draw the line? In just a moderate sea state, the Moth becomes a handful even for the best, while it creates carnage further back in the fleet. Where is the priority? To hold a race, come what may, and let the sailors use their own judgement as to whether they're up to the

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Andi Robertson

The *Tokoloshe* team is warming up for a varied 2015 season, from round the cans to the Fastnet

The successful wake of Mike Bartholomew's King 40 *Tokoloshe* is a hard one to follow in, but the South African businessman and his team are striving to do just that – whilst having an absolute blast on the water – with their modified GP42 of the same name. The King 40 (for sale at a good price, ready to rumble) won pretty much everything over the years, including a barrow load of Cowes Week's premier trophies.

But the time came to find something that was quicker, more fun and more rewarding to sail. From that perspective the GP42 represents a lot of bang for the buck without having to sell the whole art collection to optimise for IRC. The crew has been making small alterations and updates year on year, no chainsaw required. Last year they were runners-up at the IRC Nationals and at Aberdeen Asset Management Cowes Week, but were ultimately disappointed to lose out in the J.P. Morgan Asset Management Round the Island Race in the very last half mile.

Looking ahead, however, 2015 is lining up to be a good year for the *Tokoloshe* team, the core of which has been together since the first steps of the programme.

The current boat was first sourced back in September 2013 as the last GP42 to be built, the circuit-winning *Madrid-Caser Seguros*, a 2009 design from Botin Carkeek. Under skipper José Maria van der Ploeg they won three of the five regattas of the 2010 Audi MedCup season, Barcelona, Cartagena and Cagliari. It was in Germany where it was being used for race tuition when the team made an offer to secure the boat. It arrived in the UK in November of 2013.

"I always liked the boat. It has a very similar hull form to the Team New Zealand 52 but fits her lines better –



Few people can match Andi Robertson's insight into the big boat world, both in the UK and around the globe

the hull form suits her size a bit better. And it is a winner, just as *Islas Canarias*, which is identical, won previously," says Mike Richards, who helps manage the project.

Dave Bartholomew, Mike's son, recalls: "There was an initial diet for the boat, taking out 85-100kgs straightaway. We made a new keel – well, we kept the

doing most of the RORC offshores. "Yes, we want to do it again before we all get too old," smiles Richards.

"We have not made too many alterations other than the change to the keel and the backstays because we changed from the MedCup rig configuration and a bit of lamination here and there to cope with the extra loads – on the bowsprit, the top of the rig and the crane. Lots of fiddly bits, nothing too big.

"It is easy to sail and so much fun. That was what it was to be all about. Dartmouth Week we were doing 24-25kts under Start Point until it ended when we had to gybe. But even after that we were doing 18-19kts under main and jib. They are great boats."

And there will be a step up in competition for *Tokoloshe* this year, including the new *Rebellion*, a Carkeek 40 Mk2 built by Premier Composite Technologies, launched in Dubai in early February and which is due for delivery to Hamble in March. A new Ker 40 design is also in build at McConaghy's for a June arrival.

Richards says: "We plan to do the usual inshore programme, starting in the Solent, and then will do more offshores. As the Solent courses always involve a fair bit of reaching we have not needed to augment the sail inventory other than having a panelled main with a reef point for offshore."

Dave Bartholomew continues: "The whole concept of the *Tokoloshe* crew was that we enjoy sailing with fun people. Part of the success we have had is knowing the boat so well and having a good crew."

As for the Fastnet, well, Richards's thoughts chime with those of the others: "The Fastnet is about getting your window to open for you. Really you can only go out and sail your best and hope it works for you." ■

“There will be a step up in competition with a new Carkeek 40 Mk2 and a Ker 40 in build”

same bulb but it had a new fin made and got 400mm more draught. We put on a bigger bowsprit, put on a bigger square top mainsail and increased the sail area a bit. We developed a new, deeper, more efficient rudder from Tropical Engineering. It was finished the week before Cowes Week."

This year the plan is to have the Rolex Fastnet Race as the key goal for the season, building up to it by



THE RISE OF



THE CAT

As airborne multihulls take centre stage, **Andy Rice** takes an in-depth look at the unstoppable rise of the cat ▶



ABOVE Oracle Team USA training for the 2017 Cup on board their foiling AC45

BELOW Both of Jimmy Spithill's AC wins have come from multihulls

Jimmy Spithill had, until 2008, been a dyed-in-the-wool keelboat racer. He was the young punk who was spotted as an up-and-coming talent in the match racing world to be given the helm, aged 20, of America's Cup entry, *Young Australia*. He went on to become one of the most accomplished keelboat match racers, unfazed by the established big names of the sport, like Russell Coutts, Ed Baird or Dean Barker.

In the 2007 Cup in Valencia, Spithill was Luna Rossa's helmsman. But after Alinghi's successful defence of the Cup, the next three years led to a legal battle between Alinghi and BMW Oracle from the USA. Spithill had been hired by Larry Ellison's team as a top keelboat,

but suddenly the next Cup was due to take place in giant multihulls. Spithill jumped into A-class catamarans and whatever else he could get his hands on, until, in a chilly Valencia in early 2010, the Aussie steered BMW Oracle's giant 130ft wing-masted tri to victory.

Straight after the winner's press conference, I congratulated Spithill and asked him if he was looking forward to the Cup going back to keelboats. "Nah, mate, I'd rather be sailing these things again," he whispered, not wanting to step out of line with his team's insistence that the Cup would revert to keelboats.

Of course, history tells us that Russell Coutts and his boss, Larry Ellison, subsequently changed their minds. They too decided that multihulls were the future, and so it proved. The 2013 Cup was the most spectacular ever, and the sight of the hydrofoiling, high-octane AC72s has inspired a new wave of excitement and development in the multihull world.

We now seem a long way from the dark days of late 2008, when a controversial ISAF selection system at the Federation's Annual Conference led to a somewhat acrimonious vote-off between the Star and the Tornado. The Tornado lost, and there was no multihull in the Olympics. Fortunately that gap has since

been filled by the Nacra 17, a spectacular semi-foiler with the added – and unusual – interest of putting men and women together in the same Olympic discipline.

But while inshore multihull racing is firmly in the spotlight, the offshore scene is stuttering. The sensationally thrilling ORMA trimaran circuit in France became so advanced that it priced itself out of existence. The MOD70 circuit looked set to fill that vacuum and also aimed at a much more international presence than the very French ORMA scene. And while it started with a bang – the MOD70s setting some searing speeds and enjoying some great one design competition – it seems that circuit has been unable to maintain its early momentum.

Instead, the big growth area is in small-to-medium sized catamarans, partly driven by the new mania for hydrofoiling.

Two established classes that have benefited directly from the America's Cup are the A-Class singlehanders, and the C-Class doublehanders that are used to contest the Little America's Cup. A number of America's Cup sailors have been competing at recent A-Class world championships, with the latest generation boats using a set of curved daggerboards that help generate lift, although not a great deal



PHOTO: ACEA/ARNER KINGMAN; ABOVE: OTUSA/BAIXAS GARDI

“As long as it gives you thrilling, unpredictable racing, that’s what matters”

of stability. Wipe-outs are a common hazard and getting control is not easy.

Even with the switch to hydrofoiling, the man to beat remains long-time A-Class guru and sailmaker, Glenn Ashby, the 2008 Olympic silver medallist in the Tornado who went on to coach Spithill at BMW Oracle before joining Emirates Team New Zealand as Dean Barker’s wing trimmer on the AC72.

The last Little America’s Cup took place in Falmouth not long after the 2013 America’s Cup in San Francisco. The event attracted all kinds of talent, both on the sailing and design side, but it was Franck Cammas and his highly-resourced Groupama team that went on to dominate this C-Class match racing contest with a very stable and sailable wing-sailed hydrofoiler.

Crash and burn concept

Cammas and team Groupama were also participants in last season’s Extreme Sailing Series, which attracted a number of other high profile teams, including Alinghi, Emirates Team New Zealand and Ben Ainslie’s JP Morgan BAR. With the America’s Cup schedule sporadic at best, the Extreme Sailing Series became the circuit of choice for the Cup teams.

But it was interesting to note that none of the Cup teams managed to make much of an impact on the long-time top dogs in the Extremes, Alinghi and The Wave, Muscat, who between them have dominated the top two places in recent seasons.

The Extreme 40 design itself has proven very successful and resilient, but is now more than a decade old. Some say that it’s time the Extreme Sailing Series upgraded to a more modern iteration of a mid-sized catamaran, and should even consider a foiling option. Mark Turner,

series founder and organiser, maintains that the business model is not about the boat, but about close, exciting stadium racing. Outside of the sailing world, he argues, most spectators are really not that bothered about what kind of boat they’re looking at. As long as it goes fast and gives you unpredictable, thrilling racing, that’s what really matters.

It’s hard to argue with Turner, whose commercial vision and savvy is one of the sharpest in the sport. The recent agreement to televise the 2015 Extreme Sailing Series with BT Sport throws extra weight behind that.

Gathering momentum

In fact, so confident is Turner in the current format of the Series that he was happy for one of the potential rivals, the M32, to announce its own plans for 2015 actually at the Extreme Sailing Series event in Sydney last December.

The M32 was developed in 2011 by Göran Marström, a Swedish multihull builder best known for his Olympic-medal-winning Tornado catamarans and the Extreme 40 catamarans built in the mid-noughties. The M32 was already getting traction in Scandinavia, but really gained momentum when the design and production rights were purchased at the end of 2013 by successful businessman and yachtsman, Håkan Svensson.

In 2015, the M32 Scandinavian Series will be in its third season and is set to attract nine boats. But this is also the year when fledgling regional circuits will be launched in the UK, USA, Iberia, and the German lakes.

For £150,000 on the water, the M32 offers phenomenal performance. Hans Wallen, who won Bart’s Bash with his M32 last September, says he has already topped 30 knots. London 2012 Olympic gold medallist in the Star, Freddy Loof, is another early convert. “It is really wide and it has nice volume, so it is quite forgiving and you can really send it,” says Loof, who is also signed to Artemis Racing for the America’s Cup. “Downwind we are doing 23-24 knots in 18-19 knots of breeze.” Upwind, the M32 relies on its una-rig mainsail, with Marström having dispensed with a jib in the pursuit of better aerodynamics. Despite the lack of jib, the sailors say it remains manoeuvrable and quick to tack.

Finance packages are available for sailors looking to team up and compete on a regional basis. Longer term, it’s easy to imagine a global tour developing. Already for 2015, the M32 has attracted the World Match Racing Tour champions of 2013, Taylor Canfield and his US One team.

Fully foiling

Unlike the M32, the GC32 catamaran has a jib. But the biggest distinction between these two high-performance 32-footers is that this Martin Fischer design is a full hydrofoiler, capable of lifting out of the water in just 7 or 8 knots of true windspeed. Also like the M32, the GC32 has its high profile, professional fans, not least president of the GC32 Class Association, Flavio Marazzi, who represented Switzerland in the Star at the Olympics.

BELOW LEFT It may be non-foiling but the new M32 delivers phenomenal bang for your buck

BELOW RIGHT The decade old Extreme 40 still provides gripping races in the Extreme Sailing Series



RIGHT Like the GC32, the Flying Phantom is designed by Martin Fischer



PHOTO: PHANTOM INTERNATIONAL

America's Cup teams have been sniffing around the GC32, although with the AC45s due to go fully hydrofoiling in the forthcoming America's Cup World Series, it remains to be seen how many teams actually invest in their own GC32. For a boat capable of some phenomenal foiling speeds, it's remarkably easy to sail, as I found last summer when I took the helm of Pete Cummings' GC32, *Richard Mille*, which a few days later went on to win the J.P. Morgan Round the Island Race. The acceleration is impressive, but so too is the cat's docile behaviour. This ease of handling and safety characteristics will be important if the GC32 is to coax keelboat racers out of their Melges 32s, Farr 40s and Maxis.

Former Team New Zealand helmsman Cameron Appleton was impressed by the boat when he raced it at Key West Race Week in Florida at the start of this year. "These boats have made multihull foiling accessible to less experienced guys. You can get into them and steer them well, then it is about refining your skills. The learning curve is huge, but it is not on a level you can never achieve.

"Once you get up on the foils and you are used to the sensation, the boats are actually a lot more comfortable than you'd think. We were doing stuff that you couldn't do on other multihulls."

BELOW Pete Melvin's Nacra F20 FCS reflects some of his AC cat designs

BELOW RIGHT The GC32 is a full hydrofoiler, lifting out of the water in 7 knots

Phantom success

The Flying Phantom One Design burst on to the scene at the 2013 Paris Boat Show; since then, some 30 boats have been delivered, with another 30 on the order books. Like the GC32, this 18ft hydrofoiling doublehander is also designed by Martin Fischer, who was part of the design teams behind the Groupama ORMA 60, maxi-trimaran, VO70s and Groupama C-C-Class catamaran, and currently a designer for the Luna Rossa Challenge for the 35th America's Cup.

The Phantom has done a great job with its PR, attracting some top Olympic and America's Cup sailors along for trial sails, and even got itself featured in the Daily Mail.

Made of pre-preg carbon and Nomex sandwich construction, the boat weighs 155kg and uses T-foil rudders and L-shaped foiling daggerboards.

The 2015 circuit takes in a number of major events including Eurocat in Carnac and Round Texel in the Netherlands. For 16 to 20-year olds, the Red Bull Foiling Generation youth circuit will travel to multiple locations around the world. Despite its hefty price tag of more than £35,000, the Phantom is already attracting a healthy following.

Nacra evolution

Long-time multihull enthusiast and sailmaker Grant Piggott has been having a blast in his Nacra F20 FCS foiling machine, clocking up some big speeds on Southampton Water. This is also the beast of choice for BAR's sailing team which uses this high-speed 20-footer to get to grips with the whacky world of hydrofoiling.

The Nacra was designed by Pete Melvin, who has been at the forefront of multihull design in recent America's Cups, having worked on BMW Oracle's giant trimaran for 2010, been one of the architects of the AC72 and AC62 designs, as well as working with Emirates Team New Zealand for the 2013 Cup. Melvin says his large-scale design work can be seen in features of the Nacra F20 FCS.

Piggott says that with foil trim a big part of sailing the boat, the need for a really good crew is greater than ever. "You just don't have enough hands to get everything done. We're actually looking at ways of cleating the gennaker during set-up, so we can focus on other things like changing the foils."

Priced at £32,500, like the Phantom there is high demand for the Nacra F20 FCS, with a waiting list of around four months.



PHOTO: LAURENS MOREL



PHOTO: SANDER VAN DER BORCH

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PHOTO: SANDER VAN DER BORCH

LEFT It remains to be seen how many Cup teams might invest in their own GC32

Foiling for all?

The Solent Whisper has turned a lot of heads in Southampton Water over the past few months. The 5.9m foiling cat was designed and built using the state of the art facilities at Solent University's Warsash Maritime Academy.

By all accounts, the Solent Whisper is very easy to sail and is extremely stable on its hydrofoils, which were the brainchild of Ron Price, a Solent graduate who is now senior lecturer in Naval architecture. "I was very fortunate to have access to the incredible skill and knowledge of the engineering technicians, the support of staff, and use of the superb facilities at the university," says Ron. "We are engineering the boat in a way that the design is smart enough to keep the production costs low." Accessibility and affordability are key.

The Whisper is being built by long-time catamaran builders, White Formula UK in Essex. "We have got 19 boats on order," says Thom White, "and another 14 that want boats but the lead time is well into the summer now so they may

well be next year deliveries." Dealerships have already been set up for the US, Canada and several EU countries.

Retrofit option

Long-time UK cat racer, Will Sunnucks has been working on a foiling cat project called the Vampire – the first foiling cat to be fitted with canted T-foils. The 20 degree outwards cant is designed to give least drag, imitating the windward heel of a Moth sailing upwind. Although the prototype has been based on a Marstrom M20 hull, the aim of the foiling package – designed by Exocet Moth designer Kevin Ellway – is for it to be retrofitted to other existing catamarans of similar proportions.

For Sunnucks, the Vampire is a pet project, albeit one of high ambition. "I have no plans to develop the Vampire commercially. I don't think 'one designing' makes sense when the world is changing so fast; and many of the more adventurous sailors who want these boats will want to do their own thing rather than be tied to someone

else's rapidly-ageing technology. One designs may make sense in a few years time when things have settled down."

Looking to the future

These new developments are certainly generating a lot of excitement in the sailing world, but how will the latest generation of foiling boats affect the conventional cat racing scene? Grant Piggott says: "Thinking about getting back into my F18 is pretty hard, I must admit, after the fun I've been having with the Nacra F20.

"There has been a worry how these new boats are going to affect established fleets like the F18, but I see the world championship is oversubscribed for this year. So it doesn't seem to be affecting them at all badly."

Foiling multihulls in the Cup world have spawned a trickle-down effect that is reaching through to grass roots. Far from being the black sheep of the family, as the catamaran has sometimes been seen, the latest developments in the scene put the multihull front and centre of the grand prix racing world. ■



PHOTO: SOLENT UNIVERSITY



PHOTO: LLOYD IMAGES

FROM LEFT TO RIGHT

The Solent Whisper is designed to make foiling accessible; Ben Ainslie Racing training hard on their foiling AC45



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FAST FORWARD

Georgie Corlett-Pitt speaks to experts from the world of professional sailing and asks what bringing a pro on board can do for your campaign

There are plenty of classes and regattas worldwide where having professional race crew on board has long been the norm. But whether in St Tropez or the Solent, the scene is changing as a growing number of owners are drawn to the benefits that having a pro on board can bring.

One of the main motivators is that, as a society, we're busier than ever before, and with time tight, finding a fast track to improve performance is a priority for many raceboat owners. With per-day costs starting in the hundreds, the knowledge and experience that a pro sailor can offer represent a big return on investment. A growing recognition

of this has, in the last few years, meant that having a pro on board is no longer purely the preserve of the biggest or most expensive boats.

According to Pete Cumming, a pro sailor of over 13 years' experience with numerous championships and records to his name and director of pro crew agency Cat 3 Resources Ltd, this shake up of the status quo has been compounded by bigger picture trends that correlate with the economic downturn of recent years. He says: "In the smaller IRC fleets the boats have generally down-scaled, so we are seeing the same owners and teams moving from 50 or 60ft raceboats to a more manageable 30 to 40ft, and many taking the one design option



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to limit yearly spend. But these teams know the value of having a pro on board and it is an area in which they are very much willing to invest.

“In my experience, the decision to bring a pro sailor on board is not so much about the size of the boat anymore but the attitude of the owner and team. Whether you have a 25ft sportsboat or a 100ft Maxi, if the person putting the team together or paying the bills wants to fine-tune how the boat is sailed, refine how the boat and equipment is set up, or to add some tactical knowledge to the aft guard, then it makes absolute sense. These guys will be bringing vast experience and have the ability to help the owner put together and shape their project so they can achieve their sailing goals.”

And it's not just about performance. Pro sailors can also bring an assurance that kit and sails will be set up and handled correctly – guaranteeing the owner's assets and bringing peace of mind. It's another approach that's been adopted from the big boat race scene. Pete says: “At a regatta like the Rolex Maxi Worlds, the boats being raced are super expensive and due to the size of the yachts the loads are super high; as a result a mistake can damage very expensive equipment and more importantly have a real potential to hurt people on board. So experienced hands are worth their weight in that respect too.”

Adding value

The trend towards down-sizing has also squeezed the number of positions available to pro sailors, meaning that those pros who have stuck with the industry have had to work harder to keep themselves at the top of owners' go-to lists. That's further affected by 'category 3' restrictions on the number of professional sailors allowed on board each boat that are used by some classes to ensure a balance of amateur and professional sailors, as well as to help keep budgets under control.

It's a win-win situation for owners. Graham Sunderland, an internationally renowned professional sailor, is frequently asked for advice



“The down-sizing trend means pros who have stuck with the industry have to work harder”

by pro sailors starting out in the industry. He says: “To be successful as a professional sailor now you need to be able to add value to the team beyond your primary role; for example, learning about sail shapes enabled me to bring much more to any given situation.”

Gone is the stereotype of the ‘rock star’ pro who steps on board just to take the glory. The expectations placed upon a pro sailor are an increasingly complex combination of identifying areas for improvement, being aware of team expectations, and integrating quickly and effectively within that team. Graham says: “You have got to be working super-hard yourself, consistently. You can't risk putting yourself on a pedestal. Even as a professional, you have a huge amount of learning still to do and without an awareness of that, you can fall foul of being a prima donna.”

“It may be that a team wants to improve one area that isn't my strength and I may know someone who will do that job better, in which case I will refer them on.”

Naturally, each coach brings their

own specialism; from an owner's perspective, working with the right person is also important. Grant Gordon has owned a number of boats that he has campaigned with pro-am crews. His current focus is a Dragon campaign ahead of the Worlds in La Rochelle in June, and he regularly trains and competes with two pro sailors on board.

Grant says: “You need to ensure that there is a good fit in terms of personality. You have to establish a mutual respect very quickly. While skills are important, it's

ABOVE Pro sailors add will value beyond their primary role

BELOW There's an added assurance that kit will be looked after, even in tight race situations





ABOVE The TP52 scene sees many pro crews

ABOVE RIGHT Getting the right mix of personalities is important



You're shortcutting years of learning and seasons of campaigning – and with that, the associated time and costs.

“When it comes to race time, I will race hard to the best of my ability, just like the rest of the team. The goal then is to perform well together. But in terms of the bigger picture aims, it helps if both sides are very clear about what that is from the outset.”

Instant game changer

Particularly with new teams or those looking for big percentage gains in the boat's performance, bringing a professional on board, even for a short time, can be an instant game changer. Amateur crew can gain hugely from that experience; some owners specifically arrange a coaching session with a pro at the start of the year, whilst others will use them to 'fine-tune' at certain times through the season.

For many amateur crews, time is often the battle, and finding the time to practice outside of racing is – even with the best of intentions – impossible. Most pro sailors, therefore, find themselves on board for regattas more often than training. But they can also help to take the onus off amateur crews in the run-up to an event – a way for owners to outsource responsibilities, such as weather briefings or sail selection.

At the end of the day, performance isn't the only area that pro sailors can help to maximise. Owners and crew alike want to go afloat with the assurance that they are going to have a safe, enjoyable and rewarding day on the water. If employing a pro sailor can help do just that, it's easy to see why this trend is growing. ■

also a relationship – and that relationship has to work. You need to communicate well at all times, even in challenging situations, so it's essential to choose the person not just on their skills but on personality and their fit with your team.”

Campaign methodology

Grant's current campaign is an intensive one, involving around 50 days on the water ahead of the Worlds. In this extremely competitive fleet, many owners rely on the extra knowledge and experience that pro sailors have to offer, which extends beyond the confines of the race track. The benefit, says Grant, is that it allows owners to create an altogether more comprehensive programme of development.

“Pro sailors bring an awful lot, not only in terms of their knowledge but also the methodology of how to put together a good campaign from start to finish. Time is always short, so we need to work on addressing our weaknesses. The pro sailors I work with are very decisive in terms of that. By having a systematic process

for our campaign we're looking at all the different departments, first of all working on boat speed, particularly sail trim, and moving on to other areas like boat handling, start strategies and tactics,” he says.

Not all teams have such comprehensive programmes as this; some employ a pro to focus on achieving a one-off regatta result, or to improve specific areas.

Graham explains: “The goal can vary from wanting better performance overall and ‘enjoying the moments’ to winning a regatta outright. In any case, there's always a lot of contact beforehand, typically discussing crew strengths or weaknesses, sail choices, the event calendar and so on. Quite simply at that stage, the owner is drawing on your experience and knowledge.

“At the start of the campaign, owners will often identify one major issue when actually there are probably a dozen small things that can be improved. Once on board, a pro is usually able to understand the issues quite quickly and will start working with the team to address those areas.



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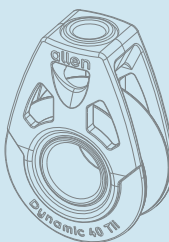


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DRAGONS UNLEASHED

Dongfeng's leg three Volvo Ocean Race win has fired imaginations. **Andy Rice** uncovers secrets of their success, and charts the fast-paced emergence of sailing in China ▶



RIGHT Dongfeng's Volvo Ocean Race campaign has created Chinese sailing heroes for the first time



CHARLIE SHUMAKER/VOLVO OCEAN RACE; PREVIOUS PHOTO: SAM GREENFIELD/VOLVO OCEAN RACE

BELOW The Beijing Olympics threw sailing into the spotlight for the host nation

OPPOSITE, TOP The Dongfeng Race Team sailing off Sanya

BOTTOM The Extreme Sailing Series has helped keep Qingdao on the map

What is the most significant development in the sailing world of the past 10 years? The 2013 America's Cup comes to mind, grabbing the public's attention in a way that sailing rarely achieves. But in terms of putting sailing on the map, Dongfeng Race Team's recent victory on leg three of the Volvo Ocean Race is by far the most significant moment. The Chinese team's victorious arrival in Sanya made a big impact on the Chinese media in a way that no other sailing event has succeeded in doing. China's first sailing gold medal came at the 2008 Olympics, with Yin Jian's victory in the women's RS-X

windsurfing, followed by Xu Lijia's gold at London 2012 in the Laser Radial. But now, Chinese success in the offshore racing scene, allied with a non-stop media campaign by Dongfeng Race Team and the PR machine of the Volvo Ocean Race, has the potential to make a much bigger impact.

Unlocking potential

Sailing is growing across all of Asia, although China has been much slower to get going than most. According to director of OC Sport, Mark Turner, it's mostly the western expat communities that have driven sailing's growth in other Asian countries. Turner is best known for helping drive Ellen MacArthur to the top of the offshore

scene in the noughties, and since then has built up a portfolio of major sporting events, not least the Extreme Sailing Series. He was also instrumental in helping design the ambitious plans that are driving Oman Sail to success across many parts of the sport. In terms of its ambition and potential impact, however, Dongfeng Race Team is arguably the most significant of Turner's projects, and could hold the key to unlocking China's enthusiasm for the sport. This could have a trickle-down effect to other parts of Asia.

"The sailing scene across different countries in Asia is all quite varied," says Turner. "In Singapore they have a great youth programme, they have got big ambitions in certain areas, but there are still a lot of expats involved there. And if you look at other countries in the region, Thailand for example, my impression is that the sailing is largely expat driven.

I think we have reached a big junction in the sport where it has the potential to grow beyond the expat community. That natural process has started already, but maybe what we are doing with the Volvo campaign is trying to give an adrenaline boost to it, and fast-track some of that development by creating Asian sailing heroes – and in our case, Chinese sailing heroes. Hopefully that feeds down to both the kid who dreams one day of doing that, and the parent who says, 'I would be proud of my kid if he did that rather than doing a normal job.' A big obstacle to developing sailing in Asia is the parents, stopping the kids continuing in the sport."



PHOTO: INGRID ABERY

High expectations

At the other end of the spectrum are the wealthy who can afford to buy a big boat. Alistair Skinner left Britain for Shanghai in 2000, and he's never gone back. The only trouble was, there was no sailing at the time. "It was either do something about it or go home," says Skinner. "So I founded the first members-run sailing club in China, the Shanghai Boating Yacht Club."

Since then, six other sailing clubs have sprung up on the same lake. The potential for growth is immense, he believes: "There was an American market research company that ran a report about five or six years ago. It concluded that, at the time, there were 35 million people in the USA who can afford a boat, everything from a kayak to a superyacht. In the USA, there were 17m boats of which 90 per cent were under 30ft. In

previous so-called Chinese campaigns, that had left a bitter taste. That's no reflection on the guys that ran those campaigns, but it made it difficult for us overcoming the perception that we were going to be just another campaign taking Chinese funding but without any real Chinese involvement. We needed to be genuinely a Chinese effort and I think we have done as much as humanly possible on that front. But doing that, and coming last wouldn't have done us any favours either. It would have been seen very negatively. You have to be winning, and anything else is seen as a failure in China, regardless of the circumstances."

Turner was saying this during the Sanya stopover, when Dongfeng Race Team had just won leg three from Abu Dhabi, won the In-Port Race, and won the restart out of Sanya at the beginning of leg four. All this, with four crew

“You have to be winning, anything else is seen as a failure in China”

Mark Turner

China at that time, there were 25m who could afford a boat – and fewer than 600 boats in the whole country!”

This is why Dongfeng's success in the Volvo Ocean Race is such a vital catalyst. But first impressions of the sport count, and Turner says the job of getting the Chinese to buy into the Dongfeng dream has been made harder by previous challenges with Chinese affiliations.

“We have got Chinese owners here in Sanya who, before the start of the race, we couldn't get engaged. They felt they had got their fingers burnt by the

changes, including the loss for leg four of Pascal Bidégorry, the outstanding navigator on the first three legs of the race. Surely even Turner couldn't have foreseen just how competitive Dongfeng would prove to be in the Volvo Ocean Race, so could the Chinese public really be so unforgiving of anything other than victory? “It doesn't matter how much you try to explain what it really means, how difficult it is to beat this fleet. No one understands that. So we have been lucky that our stars have aligned and that so far we have achieved our best”



PHOTO: ANHUA SANCHEZ/VOLVO OCEAN RACE



PHOTO: LLOYD IMAGES

VOR leg three: How Dongfeng's domination played out

A quick glance at how leg three of the Volvo Ocean Race played out could make the race look something of a stroll for Dongfeng. The Chinese-backed team took the lead two days after leaving Abu Dhabi and remained at the head of the field throughout.

At one point the gap between themselves and second place was over 100 miles! Why, then did Caudrelier state at the finish that the leg was “the most stressful I have ever done in my life”?

There is no single answer to this question. Certainly this edition of the Volvo Ocean Race has been the closest in the history of the event – thanks in a large part to the introduction of a one design class for the very first time.

Perhaps, though, the biggest stress for the French skipper came about from the very light and patchy winds the fleet experienced throughout the leg.

Take the aforementioned 100-mile lead. This came in the

Malacca Strait after the rest of the fleet got stuck in a wind hole. However, just 12 hours earlier, Dongfeng had been stuck in the very same wind hole and the chasing pack had closed to within a handful of miles. It's easy to imagine the overwhelming frustration of watching while such a lead disintegrates.

This compress and extend routine was to happen again and again. But crucially, each time Dongfeng parked, they managed

to do so in a position that would force those behind to sail a huge distance around them to make any substantial gain.

Essentially the team executed the strategy of staying between your opposition and the next mark perfectly, over the course of a month, without once making even the smallest mistake.

This is how the team won the leg and much of the congratulation for that should go to Dongfeng's navigator, Pascal Bidégorry.



PHOTO: VICTOR HAMILTON/VOLVO OCEAN RACE

“A guy in Shanghai said to himself, ‘what boat do we get for the club?’ I know, we’ll get a TP52”

Mark Turner

ABOVE Dongfeng Race Team’s prestigious official launch ceremony took place in Sanya

possible result. Very lucky, and it’s not a game changer for the sport in China overnight – but it is a building block that is necessary to take the sport up a little.”

Barriers and opportunities

Turner believes that sailing in Asia is at a similar point to Europe in the 1960s, with the high-profile endeavours of Sir Francis Chichester, Sir Robin Knox-Johnston and Eric Tabarly triggering a wider interest and enthusiasm for sailing, which has since grown into a much broader leisure activity. One of the big differences surely is China’s perceived lack of modern seafaring culture, although Skinner points out that China has the world’s second largest merchant fleet. Turner says: “600 years ago, China was the master of the ocean. They had the ships and the sailors and they were a dominant

force on the sea. It is buried in their DNA somewhere, but they haven’t had the opportunity in recent times to tap into that seafaring legacy.”

Most Chinese people don’t know how to swim, and this has to be a barrier, although Skinner argues that this is also a matter of opportunity. “When you go to Qingdao or Sanya on a summer’s day, the beaches are crowded. There is a healthy respect for water, and change is coming, because people have more leisure time now and want to learn these things.”

Skinner says that the growth of sailing in China is following a similar path to Britain in the 20th century. “In the early 20th century, you had the wealthy racing in large yachts like the J Class,” he says. “It was a rich man’s sport. But the thing that changed that was the development of waterproof adhesives for World War II aircraft like the Mosquito.”

Eventually that adhesive technology filtered through to the consumer, and was a vital ingredient in the DIY boom of the 1950s and 1960s, when the BBC’s DIY expert Barry Bucknell teamed up with Jack Holt to produce kit boats like

the Enterprise and Mirror. Sailing was no longer the preserve of the wealthy. It became available to all.

Skinner believes the growth will come from both ends of the market in China. “The wealthy always want a new toy, so they’ll go out and buy the 40-footer as their first boat. A guy in Shanghai has founded a sailing club as a business opportunity, and asked himself, ‘what boat do we get for the club?’ I know, we’ll get a TP52! You could say he’s ambitious, or naive. But at least he’s bought a boat. But the real growth will come from the masses.”

Meanwhile, Turner will focus on developing the heroes that he believes are required to drive the grassroots growth in sailing. The ultimate goal is to see a Volvo Ocean Race team with a Chinese skipper and a crew that is predominantly Chinese. He believes we are at least two editions away from seeing that, possibly more. However, at this stage there are no plans for Dongfeng to return to the race a second time. “We are working hard on getting something in place for the next race because it’s really important to get some continuity. Otherwise we could be back in the same place in two years’ time,” Turner warns. The current Dongfeng project has done much of the hard work of taking raw recruits and training them up to race offshore at the highest level. But without continuity, that talent could slip away.

Let’s hope that Dongfeng Race Team continues to capture the attention of the Chinese public and that someone picks up the baton. What’s happening in the Volvo Ocean Race is not just good for China, it is good for anyone who cares about the development of sailing beyond its western roots. ■

Charles Caudrelier: Winning with the Chinese

Under the tutorship of French sailors like Dongfeng coach, Bruno Dubois, and the boat’s skipper, Charles Caudrelier, the young Chinese talent has made incredible strides in just one year of hard training.

“The Chinese have already proven how good they can be in the Olympics, with two gold medals,” says Caudrelier. “They

have a good spirit, they are very hardworking, smart and learn quickly and they are also rigorous and respect hierarchy and leadership. They are good at working in a team, and with a billion people it is very easy to find big people and small people, depending on the job they are required for.

“We picked big, strong, young

guys for this race. And some of them can go on to be very good offshore racers in the future. Some of them are only 20 years old, so they are too young to be leaders.

“But maybe with two or three Volvo Ocean Races, they will have the skills and experience to become watch captains, maybe even skipper.”

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Even the smallest sailors have big dreams.
Georgie Corlett-Pitt talks to double
Olympic gold medallist **Sarah Ayton OBE**
about bringing those ambitions within reach

REACHING FOR THE STARS

At the age of 17, Sarah Ayton was ranked British number one in the Laser Radial. The Surrey-born sailor had found a taste for competitive sailing on the well-trodden path from Optimists via 420s. By the time she was 18,

she had secured silver at the ISAF Youth Sailing World Championship, and had fast become one of Britain's brightest Olympic hopes.

Sarah describes: "This was my first taste of the podium. It was what gave me the motivation and aspiration to then go on to win Olympic gold in Athens 2004 and Beijing 2008."

Of course, success on this scale does not come without hard work and sacrifice. "Determination and a huge competitive streak separate the elite from casual sailors," says Sarah. "As with all young people growing up there are always other things in life. You have to be extremely committed to be the best, which usually involves



PHOTO: RYA, BRITISH SAILING TEAM / PAUL WYETH

missing occasions such as birthdays and all the fun things your friends are doing. But that sacrifice is important in getting you to where you want to be.

“You have to be prepared to make sacrifices. It is the honest reality of becoming an elite athlete. You have to be ready to put in every hour you have to develop your skills both on and off

the water. Don’t be afraid to commit. The hours you put in practising are the rewards you will then gain at events.”

Those rewards come in the shape of improved results, and may be as simple as finishing one place ahead of your rival in the next open meeting, or improving a certain percentage on your results from the same event last year, or it may be

making the cut for a team or squad.

For any young sailor, it’s a big thing to ask – and at every stage a careful balance is needed, taking studies, friendships and other interests into account – something parents and coaches are there to ensure.

There are of course days when things don’t go so well on the water ▶

ABOVE Plenty of practise and a sense of determination will put you on the right track

How to create a 'performance mindset'

British Sailing Team psychologist, Sophie Walton, has this advice for ensuring your mind is in the right place, so you are ready to perform at your best when it comes to your next big event:

- Build self-awareness – Be aware of how your mind and body respond to competitive situations and know what works for you. Recognising this will create a greater understanding of yourself as an athlete and how this impacts on your performance.
- Nervous is normal – It is important to remember that some emotions (nervousness, uncertainty, excitement) are normal responses. How you choose to act next is key. Be aware of some of these thoughts and behaviours and stick to your routines and processes that you have worked on in training.

- Acceptance – Being willing and able to accept how you may be thinking and feeling is important. Recognise that performance is still possible in the presence of difficult emotions by focusing on the here and now. Constantly ask yourself, what's important now? And focus on the actions needed to achieve this, using logic and facts over emotion.
- Train to race – Practising with intensity to the same level we compete can help prepare for big events. Replicating 'game day' pressures can ultimately reduce the stress we experience at big events as we have exposed ourselves more frequently to these situations.



PHOTO: IOC

It really is a team effort

Whatever your next goal may be, it's a natural inclination to benchmark against your fellow competitors. But you also need to be prepared to work with them; as those involved with any sort of squad programme will know, success comes when the game is raised across the board.

It's something that Sarah discovered in her very first Olympic campaign, when she missed out on selection for the women's singlehander spot herself, but instead landed the role of training partner to Shirley Robertson, who went on to win the gold. Reward came when, the following Olympic cycle, Shirley and Sarah joined forces and, together with Sarah Webb, they campaigned their way to gold in the three-person Yngling class.

"It takes a lot of time being part of a sailing team. It's like a marriage – you're away a lot of the year with each other. It takes 100 per cent dedication, you have to keep trying to be better," she says.

For promising young sailors, their first taste of being part of a squad or team often comes via the RYA's British Youth Sailing pathway. Ensuring you get the most of the group training opportunities that come with that is crucial – something that is true of any coaching opportunity that comes up in your sailing career. Sarah advises: "It's important to go into any coaching

“There are always new things to learn, the best way to improve is by asking questions”

Sarah Ayton



and it seems all too tempting to turn your back on the situation. Life has plenty of distractions, but keeping your focus on the long term goal has its rewards. Sarah's advice is to keep going. "A career in sailing can be hugely rewarding, you can travel the world and meet great people."

As well as world championship and Olympic medal wins, Sarah has gone on to become one of the only female sailors competing in the Extreme Sailing Series, which she says is an amazing experience, and goes to prove that opportunities for talented sailors don't just rest with Olympic sailing.

Bad day on the water?

Turning a disappointing experience into something positive can begin before the event is actually experienced.

Adversity and failure are normal processes for everyone, not least athletes. Discussing this and making sure young sailors know this, is imperative and can help turn negatives into positives. Although these adverse situations and failures may be difficult to experience, there will be something to learn from them.

Ask the question, what will we do differently next time as a result of this experience? No Olympic athlete achieved their level of success without experiencing failure at some stage, and have, as a result, developed a high level of resilience, whereby they have an ability to repeatedly respond to adversity by exerting more effort instead of simply giving up.

- Sophie Walton, British Sailing Team psychologist

PHOTO: RYA BRITISH SAILING TEAM/RICHARD LANGDON

Read more advice at
yachtsandyachting.co.uk



session or training opportunity with the mentality that you are going to learn – there are always new things to learn! Throughout my career I have never stopped learning.

“Undoubtedly, the best way to improve is by asking questions. Ask the people who are coaching you for their advice; if they are delivering the session you can be assured they are the best in their game.”

Parental advisory

When it comes to turning dreams of being the best into reality, it's not just the sailors who have to be ready to make sacrifices, but parents too. Enduring long hours of trailing dinghies up and down the motorways and squinting through binoculars to watch every tack and gybe is all par for the course – and in fact, this sort of support goes further than you may realise in setting a good example.

“The cost of buying a boat and the right equipment can be enough to put a black hole into most families' household budgets,” says Sarah. “Looking back, I really appreciate how hard my parents worked to fund us. It made me realise you've got to work for a reward and that's set my attitude in life. I feel very lucky to be able to go out every day and do something I love.”

As a parent, developing an ability

to enhance, rather than quash, your child's potential with your own enthusiasm is essential; it's all too easy to fall into the 'pushy parent' stereotype. “There is nothing wrong with wanting the best for your child and wanting them to do well,” says Sarah. “But there comes a point when too much criticism can be damaging and can, as a result, cause them to crack under the pressure. Confidence and success come as a package, so focus on positive encouragement instead of negative criticism.”

“As a parent it is important not to place too much importance on winning, as the disappointment when they don't win could have a longer effect. Encourage them and remind them what they are good at, instead of focusing on the negative comments before the event. After the event is over it is good to reflect on the day and ask 'what can you do better next time?' rather than you as a parent telling them what they did wrong.”

Now, as a parent of two young boys herself, Sarah is looking forward to introducing them to the sport that she loves, but she's adamant that they won't be heading for the start line straight away. “When young sailors first start, it has to be because they want to make friends and have fun on the water. The competitive side can come later; first and foremost it's all about fun.” ■

Positive parenting

Support networks (aka parents!) can have a significant influence on athlete development and performance. Here's how mums and dads can help and encourage young sailors:

- Reward effort and persistence by emphasising how hard they worked.
- Nurture learning by helping them actively seek new learning opportunities rather than letting it happen by chance.
- Encourage sailors to persist through the challenging times and learn from their mistakes – this develops resilience and motivation even through delayed gratification.
- Above all, it is imperative that the sport remains fun for the sailor so they remain engaged.

- Sophie Walton, British Sailing Team psychologist

ABOVE Young sailors thrive on encouragement, so create a fun, positive learning environment

BELOW Sarah's ongoing dedication has helped her to become one of the few female sailors on the Extreme Sailing Series circuit



Ocean ambition

There is no set pathway to finding yourself at the helm of a state-of-the-art Open 60 at the start of a Vendée Globe solo round-the-world race. Many young sailors dream of it; most do not get even close, either falling short in terms of ultimate ability, or for financial reasons.

Jack Bouttell, a 24-year-old Australian-born soloist now resident in Britain and sailing under British colours, is making his own path towards a Vendée Globe dream that started when he and his family drove down from their home in Oxford to spend a day in Southampton. Aged 15 at the time, Jack remembers seeing Mike Golding's gleaming Open 60, *Ecover*, parked alongside the dock in Ocean Village, and he was hooked. He knew then what he wanted out of life and in his determined way he has been trying to make it happen ever since.

After jumping on boats wherever he could, Jack's big break came when he was selected in 2012 for the Artemis Offshore Academy that trains young British sailors in the skills of solo racing and prepares them for entry into the Solitaire du Figaro – Eric Bompard Cachemire, the race that is the recognised proving ground for the Vendée. For the ambitious academy sailors, lining up alongside the world's best offshore sailors in the Solitaire is equivalent to swapping go-karting for Formula 1 – overnight. Taking this into account, Bouttell made a stunning debut in the 2013 Figaro, finishing in 21st place and as the top rookie in the 45-strong fleet.

That perhaps should have smoothed his path a little – but it was followed by a difficult year in 2014 when a late entry to the Figaro saw him rushed, ill-prepared and finishing

Fresh from victory in leg three of the Volvo Ocean Race **Jack Bouttell** is leading the charge of the next generation of Britain's best ocean racers, as **Ed Gorman** finds out

a disappointing 25th. Apart from failing to find sponsors in his first year out of the academy, the major distraction had been a tantalising possibility to become part of Ian Walker's crew on the Volvo Ocean 65, *Abu Dhabi Ocean Racing*. It didn't work out, but the Volvo Ocean Race had moved into Bouttell's sights as another stepping-stone to the Vendée.

Volvo call-up

Imagine then his delight when he got the call-up to join Charles Caudrelier and Pascal Bidégorry and their crew of Figaro veterans that make up Dongfeng Race Team, the Chinese-sponsored syndicate in this edition of the Volvo Ocean Race and the surprise leaders after the first three stages. With the Dongfeng campaign managed by OC Sport, the company that also runs the Artemis Offshore Academy, the selection of Bouttell for the arduous leg three from Abu Dhabi to Sanya, China might have seemed like an easy inside job. In fact, Bouttell didn't know until the last minute that he was on.

Then came the ride of his life as he played his part in an exceptionally tough and exceptionally hot light-airs marathon, as Frenchman Caudrelier and his team led the fleet from the end of day one all the way to the finish in China, where they arrived as conquering heroes at the boat's

home port. For Bouttell this was an opportunity that he grasped with both hands – the chance not only to sail with Figaro winners in Caudrelier and Bidégorry, but also to prove his worth as a helmsman and trimmer at the highest level.

"I loved it," reflects the laidback Bouttell, who is a softly-spoken and modest individual but with a steely glint in his eye. "There were obviously times when you disliked it and didn't want to be there – but they were very few. For me this was something I had wanted to do for so long and it was an amazing experience."

He talks of the incredible heat, the dreadful moments when *Dongfeng* was being hunted down by the chasing pack in the Strait of Malacca and in a park-up in the South China Sea just 24 hours from the finish, and the relentlessly changing wind conditions. "It was hard physically – being at sea for 24 days and we were doing a lot of sail changes and manoeuvres – but I guess it wasn't as bad as a full-on Southern Ocean leg. Mentally it was quite tough because it was very light winds and you were trying to focus the whole time, and there was a lot of concentration needed to try and get the boat moving. At these sorts of speeds the percentage performance changes are so much bigger – if you are doing one knot and the next guy is doing two, he's doubling your boat speed."

Bouttell would typically spend half his four-hour watch trimming and the other half driving, impressing his skipper with his speed. Caudrelier afterwards described him as an accomplished and strong performer on the helm.

Like others in the fleet, Bouttell found the new Volvo thoroughbred a tricky customer on the wind. ▶

“Mentally it was tough in the light winds... At these speeds the percentage performance changes are so much bigger”





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THIS PAGE Bouttell adds a VOR leg win to his CV; solo techniques learnt with the Artemis Offshore Academy were key to that success



PHOTO: SAM GREENFIELD/DONGFENG RACE TEAM/VOR

“It’s a nice boat to drive – a great boat to drive, pretty fun,” he summarises. “For me it was really hard to find a groove upwind where it would just go. It was partly the changeable conditions, but it never felt like it sort of locked in and you didn’t need to move the helm – it always felt like you were driving it quite a lot. On the few windy days when you had 20-25 knots of boat speed, reaching at high speed, and you were just hanging on, it was pretty incredible.”

Solo pedigree

There has been some talk that the success of the Dongfeng team in the early part of this race – they finished second in the first two legs prior to their win in leg three – has been down to the Figaro pedigree of many of the sailors chosen by Caudrelier.

The theory follows that this is a team that knows how to get the most out of a one design offshore, and it is a crew which is equally at

“Reaching at high speed, when you were just hanging on – it was pretty incredible”



PHOTO: BRIAN CARLIN/ADA



PHOTO: BRIAN CARLIN/ADA



PHOTO: SAM GREENFIELD/DONGFENG RACE TEAM/VOY



PHOTO: OCEAN IMAGES/DAI



PHOTO: SAM GREENFIELD/DONGFENG RACE TEAM/VOY



PHOTO: BRIAN CARLIN/ADA

home working the bow, driving, trimming or doing a fill-in stint at the nav table. Bouttell had the chance to look and learn and certainly believes there is something in this.

“Everyone except (Frenchman) Kevin Escoffier and the two Chinese crew on the leg (pitman Liu Xue and shore team expert Cheng Ying Kit) had come from the Figaro and it was really nice because everyone had that same mindset from the singlehanded stuff. In a way we were all our own skippers but it was a team too,” he said.

Bouttell was hugely impressed by Caudrelier, who harbours Vendée Globe ambitions of his own, and by Bidégorry. He noticed, for example, that both have a great knack for making a boat go fast and every time either of them would appear on deck they would make one or two small adjustments that would immediately pay off by giving better boatspeed.

But overall, Caudrelier’s greatest asset, he believes, is his man management of a team he picked very carefully before the start.

“Charles did a really good job of

watch talking through Figaro ideas and discussing his preparation for this year’s grand-prix that sets sail at the end of May. He believes he will come to the startline at Bordeaux with a real “bounce” from his Volvo Ocean Race stint, something that was missing during his difficult time last year.

“The thing that I have gained out of it and I am now going to take back into the Figaro is that I have really got the intensity back into my sailing,” he said. “Last year I probably lost it a little bit because I was always on my own, and you do lose a bit on your own because it is hard to keep yourself going and stay motivated. But doing something like the Volvo Ocean Race when there wasn’t a single second when you were awake when you were not pushing the boat, was a real lesson. Everyone was on it, everyone was stressed and everyone was pushing and the crews on the other boats were all the same.”

So Bouttell returns to the Figaro rejuvenated and looking forward to trying to build on that stunning 2013 result. He is unwilling to

“On *Dongfeng* everyone gels and everyone wants to be there, and they are all doing it because they love it – not for the money”

picking the ‘western’ crew members,” says Bouttell. “He had sailed with them all before, knew them well and knew they were going to get on. One of his big motivations was to get a crew that really got on and didn’t fight – if you look at *Mapfre* (the Spanish entry) you can see it’s hard work just to get through the leg. To be on a boat with seven people for 24 days, the better you get on, the better you go. On *Dongfeng* everyone gels and everyone wants to be there, and they are all doing it because they love it, not for the money or any other reason.”

Vendée ambitions

The experience of racing with Caudrelier and his team has given Bouttell plenty of food for thought, not least because he spent hours off-

talk about where he wants to finish. You sense that he thinks it unbecoming to talk himself up in advance – he’d rather get the result first and let that do the talking.

Reluctantly he acknowledged that a top-10 finish would be a huge step towards his Vendée Globe goal for the 2020 edition of the round-the-world solo marathon. But he still wasn’t too happy about discussing it. “It would be a massive step for me toward the Vendée, to be not at the top of the sailing realm but knocking on the door... no, that doesn’t sound right. If you look at the Dongfeng team, all the guys have either won the Solitaire du Figaro or done really well in it, so that sort of finish would put me on the right track to be moving forward fast in different boats and different fleets.”

RIGHT From his solo training with the Artemis Offshore Academy to his stint with the Dongfeng team, Jack’s offshore skills have gone from strength to strength

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Taking on the champions

Sixth-form student **Rachel Grayson** had a momentous 2014 in which she won the Mirror National and European Championships, then secured an impressive sixth in the Endeavour Trophy. The talented teen talks to **Toby Heppell**



“I was thinking we might have a chance of being in the top five”

event,” Grayson admits in typically self-effacing style. “Really the main thing going through my head was that I thought I could end up last – and I really did not want that to happen.”

It is, perhaps, unsurprising that Rachel was nervous before the event began. Not only was she competing against some of the best sailors in the country, she would also be racing the asymmetric Topper Argo, which could hardly be more different from her usual Mirror. “I had not raced an asymmetric boat competitively in any event before, so I thought that would be a challenge. However, I had done a bit of sailing in an RS200 at our club so I was not completely new to the concept.”

The RS200 would have stood Rachel in good stead, as the newly-selected boat of choice for the event, the Topper Argo, is reasonably similar to the popular doublehander – conceptually at least. Both are hiking boats with a fairly small sail area up and downwind. Perhaps fortuitously, the Argo this year replaced the Topper Xenon, which had been the Endeavour boat of choice for the previous nine years. With the Argo weighing 40kg less than the Xenon and with a smaller sail area, the move has made the event more appealing to the lighter, smaller teams invited to the regatta.

“It was good turning up for the training [the Friday before the event begins] and realising that no one else had sailed the Argo before,” says Rachel. “That gave me a bit of confidence. I actually really enjoyed sailing the boat; it was quite stable which meant it was a bit forgiving, and which was useful when trying to get to grips with it.

“It was not quite as quick as the RS200 and took a little while longer to get up and planing but certainly on the windier of the two days it felt plenty quick!”

Rachel also puts her success down to Endeavour veteran Nigel Wakefield, who volunteered to crew for her at the event. “The Endeavour was not really

something I thought about at all until after the Nationals and the Europeans – and even then it only occurred to me when I was asked if I wanted to attend and Nigel said he would be happy to crew for me. I was very lucky he offered, as I don’t know how well I would have done without him.”

Growing ambitions

Discussing the Endeavour Trophy it quickly becomes clear how focussed Rachel had been on her Mirror sailing ahead of the Nationals and Europeans in Brixham. However, she was not entirely confident as to how well she would do in the event, as she explains: “Going into the Nationals, I was sort of thinking that [my crew] Gemma [Burnett] and I had been doing well on the circuit and that we might have a chance of being in the top five. But we had not been sailing together as a team all that long and we are both pond sailors. With an event on the sea I was a little concerned that we might be out-sailed by some of those with more experience, particularly the adults in the class.”

It was not until the end of the first day of racing that Rachel herself realised how much winning the event would mean to her.

Having started both of the opening races well, boat preparation troubles

It is fair to say that 2014 was a good year for Rachel Grayson. She won the combined Mirror National and European Championships before ending the year with a sixth place at the Topper Endeavour Trophy – the highest ever result for a female helm.

The Endeavour certainly stands as an impressive result for the youngster from Beaver SC. This renowned Champion of Champions event annually sees the finest dinghy sailors in the UK pitting their skills against one another in a one design class.

“I was pretty nervous going into the



FACING PAGE The Mirror fleet provides a hotbed of competitive sailing

LEFT Rachel with Endeavour silverware



PHOTO: ROYAL CORINTHIAN YACHT CLUB



PHOTO: MATT GRAYSON

“I was competing in the Europeans the day my GCSE results came out, but I waited”

ABOVE LEFT Sizing up the considerable competition at the Endeavour, with crew Nigel Wakefield

ABOVE RIGHT Rachel (70756) fights it out at the front of the fleet

hit when in one race her mainsheet snapped and in the next her lead corrector weights came loose. She still managed to finish both races with a fifth position, which would be satisfactory for most, but not to this newly ambitious teen. “I came off the water and I think I might have cried after that day. It was odd, all my friends were saying ‘you got two fifths you should be happy’, and Gemma seemed to think it was odd too, but

I’d realised then that I wanted to win it badly - and that we could do so.”

And win it she did, in emphatic style, ending the championship with no other results outside of the top four, allowing her to discard those two opening day results.

It’s hard not to note a similar pattern to one Sir Ben Ainslie who, throughout his career, has often begun big events with poor results, which he would then later be able to discard. But as any sailor at the top of their game will know, the struggle is often having to prioritise pre-event. At the recent Mirror Worlds in South Africa, Rachel was notably absent, despite significant temptation to go for the title hat trick. “It would have been nice to go,” she reflects. “But at the moment I have to focus on my school studies and the dates were not good for me.”

Planning ahead

Ambition, it seems, extends beyond the world of sailing and Rachel is currently at sixth-form college, hoping to get a place studying medicine at university. “It can be difficult juggling studying and sailing, particularly at the moment as my college seem keen on setting homework on Friday expecting it to be completed for Monday.

“Last year when I was competing in the Nationals and Europeans it was the same week that my results came out for my GCSEs. But I waited until I got

home and the event was over before I found out my results. I reckoned that, with the exams over, there was nothing I could do about the results and whatever the outcome it would just distract me from my sailing.”

With medicine firmly on the horizon at university what does the future hold in sailing terms? “I can’t imagine ever being without my Mirror,” she states emphatically. “It’s a great boat and the fact that adults and young sailors can compete on even terms makes it even better. In Mirror squad training we have done a bit of team racing and I am really looking forward to doing more of that at whatever university I go to. But at the moment a lot of my focus is on my studies.”

That is not to say that sailing is out of the question. Rachel plans to continue Mirror sailing and currently crews for her older sister in an RS200 at their local club. She has plans to attend the RS200 Nationals this year, crewing for her (older again) brother. “I’m actually going to spend quite a lot of time in Abersoch this summer. The Mirror Nationals are there, and I want to defend my title. Then I am crewing for my brother in the RS200; that will be our first proper event, so we will see how that goes.

“After that I am going to be sailing the 2000 Nationals there too. I met the 2000 champion at the Endeavour and she asked if I wanted to sail with her at the event this year and I thought ‘why not.’”

And that elusive Mirror Worlds crown? “The next worlds are in 2017 in Restronguet, I will just have finished my first year at university then, so there is nothing to stop me going and giving it a shot.”

Rachel’s go-faster tips

I need to thank Dave Woodhead, my coach for teaching me many of these points. He is the best coach you could hope for!

1) Kicker

The kicker is really important and something that people do not use enough. When going upwind I am playing the kicker most of the time.

2) Free and fast

Too many people pinch in Mirrors. I tend to focus more on boat speed. My main thought at Brixham was that not enough people were sailing for speed.

3) Head out of the boat

Keep your eyes out watching for gusts, clouds and other boats.

4) Teamwork

It’s a joint effort in a doublehander and without good teamwork you can’t really have good boat handling.

5) Confidence

You need to know your rules and be willing to take risks if you think they’ll pay off. Following the crowd gets you nowhere especially if you don’t get good starts.

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“It could be hard to guarantee the rig wouldn’t come down, such is the strength of modern sails”



From cotton to carbon and beyond, **Toby Heppell** takes an in-depth look at the evolution of sailcloth and manufacture, and assesses the pros and cons of progress

ARMS RACE



PHOTO: RICHARD LANGDON/OCEAN IMAGES

ABOVE Fibre options in laminate and membrane sails offer different properties

The forefront of racing has always been something of an arms race. And nowhere is this truer than in the sails we buy. As technology advances, so designers fight for the incremental gains that can mean the difference between winning and not.

The difficulties in sail manufacture remain as they have always been as Ben Rodgers from sail cloth manufacturer, Dimension Polyant explains: “The main things you are looking for in material terms are longevity, light weight and shape-holding” – attributes that tend to be counterintuitive.

Traditionally, the ability to hold shape was the most significant factor, with many of the pre-manmade fabrics (such as cotton) stretching

hugely. These material woes are well summarised by Austin Farrar, quoted in CJ Marchaj’s *Aero-Hydrodynamics of Sailing*: “After 20 minutes or so of sailing close-hauled, the sheet will need tightening to keep the sail correctly trimmed even though the wind strength has not increased; and the clew will have to come back and down several inches... As the wind gets up a little bit more the luff will need stretching more and the sheet tightening again” – problems, which we will see, were to come full circle.

With the invention of Dacron in the 1950s (a trade name of the DuPont company who manufactured the Polyethylene terephthalate – PET – cloth), so sailmakers were able to build sails which stretched less than ever before. However, even with this new woven fabric put through processes to keep the weave as firm as possible – such as high pressure rolling – there would still inevitably be some creep, shape distortion and shrinkage.

Going see-through

If Dacron sails solved a great deal of deformation issues, then laminate sails, riddled with high-strength fibres, sandwiched between layers of material, promised to hold their shape better than ever before when they first appeared in the 1970s. “It is not exactly rocket science to see that high strength fibres with a film on either side would be lighter and stronger than woven sails,” comments Nigel Grogan of Hyde Sails. “But whether they are the best solution depends on what you are looking for in a suit of sails.”

Where stretch and deformation were problems with woven sails, laminates brought into sharp focus other issues, particularly UV degradation and – new

to this type of sail – delamination.

“At least with a cloth sail you are able to see it slowly get more misshapen over time. The stronger you go with the fibre in a laminate or membrane sail, the more likely you are to get sudden catastrophic failure,” explains Nigel.

As we see time and again in the sailing world, new technology arrives at the top of the tree and works its way down. So, although in the early 1970s we saw laminate sails appear in the America’s Cup scene – where longevity is not a primary concern – making those sails work for the consumer market was a very different prospect.

It is this lack of longevity at the top that leads to the popular assumption that ‘carbon is best’. “What fibres are best for use, really depends on the client and their plans. Carbon does not withstand flogging and impact very well, and can break down quite quickly if care is not taken. By combining different fibres we can reduce the effects but not eradicate them,” says Ben. “For this reason it is very important for us to work alongside sailmakers to ensure they are getting the right cloth and fibres for the job.” (See table on page 58 for a guide to fibre qualities.)

Leap from laminates

Laminate sails were a big step forward in technology but by the late 1980s and early 1990s we saw yet another change, the invention of membrane or ‘string’ sails.

Laminate panel sails essentially involve sail lofts cutting (usually supplied) cloth with certain fibres and then building shape into the sail by sealing panels together. This changed with the advent of membrane sails

Sail tech timeline →

1950s: 12m *Vim* (built 1939) featured Ted Hood as part of the America’s Cup crew to become the defender of the 1960 America’s Cup. Hood experimented with Dacron sails – seen as a novelty at the time. *Columbia* (built 1958) used Terylene sails by Ratsey & Lapthorn. These trials greatly increased understanding of these two man-made fibres.

1970s: Laminate sailcloths and exotic materials begin to appear at the highest end of the racing scene. Yellow sails (the colour of the Kevlar used) feature.

1980s: Peter Conrad, the owner of Sobstad sails, takes out two patents. The patents included two core concepts. One, known as ‘Airframe 639’ (essentially membrane sails); the other, known as ‘Genesis’ (essentially panel laminate sails). They would later take North to court for patent infringement via its 3DL process.

1990: Luc Dubois and JP Baudet produce the first 3DL sail for North. The pair laid every fibre by hand over a mould. The sail was a J/24 genoa. North patents the moulded part of the operation.



“Laminates brought into sharp focus UV degradation and delamination”

where the sail is built, usually in house, by the sailmaker. Probably the best known example are North's 3DL sails (the catalyst for a protracted court battle with Sobstad, see below). 3DLs are built on a mould with the fibres being laid on to a shaped membrane and following the predicted loadpaths of the sails before being covered with another membrane and then baked, to form one continuous, moulded sail.

North claimed 3DL delivered similar shape holding and longevity over panel laminates in a package that was roughly 30 per cent lighter. For people who could get hold of a suit, 3DLs became the go-to product and were used by every team in the 2002-03 America's Cup, 10 of 11 teams in the 2007 Cup, all teams in the 2002-03 and 2005-06 Volvo Ocean Race – an

impressive roster of customers. 3DLs also remain the sail of choice in the 18ft Skiff fleet, with almost all of the top teams running a suit of Norths.

However, despite the impressive list of clients for North, Quantum Sails and a number of others, insist that panelled laminates remain the most effective solution to sail design. With its own Quantum Racing TP52, the company saw great success on the circuit with its panelled laminate sails while much of the rest of the fleet were running North 3DLs.

There are those who argue, anyway, that North Sails' mould technique, with a shaped membrane is no different to any other cut-shaped membrane with full-length fibres added. Additionally, being glued and heat set, there is an argument

that 3DLs do not solve the issue of delamination due to a stiffening of the fibres within the lamination, which is caused by the resins used to glue layers together and water ingress in fibres.

But as technology evolves, many firms are finding ways around delamination. “We laminate our EPEX sails under such high pressures and with perforations before the layup that we are certain our sails will not delaminate from water ingress as they are completely sealed, and void-free,” says Jeremy White from Elvstrom Sails. So confident is Elvstrom, that it offers a ‘no-delamination’ warranty.

A different approach

Modern-day lamination techniques have improved laminate and membrane sails no end, but other

ABOVE North's 3Di
Raw sails are the
latest innovation

1992: After huge investment in the sails for the Italian AC challenger, *Il Moro di Venezia*, Bill Koch's *America3* beats them to AC victory. Koch had a whole new fibre created, which would later be developed into Cuben Fibre (named after the cubed part of the AC defender's name).

2002: Following protracted negotiations and court battles, the North Sails/Sobstad case is settled for an undisclosed sum.

2002: Elvstrom buys Sobstad and the remaining rights to their patents. Elvstrom-Sobstad then gave sailcloth manufacturer Dimension Polyant a license to make the 'Genesis' material Dimension Polyant, which sells to a range of clients.

2006-2007: Genesis patents expire in the US and Europe respectively.

2007: The Cuben Fibre Corporation is acquired by North Sails.

2011: Virbrac Paprec wins the Barcelona World race using North 3Di sails. The sails go on to help win the VOR and Vendée Globe.



PHOTO: IAN ROMAN

“A polymer bonds the layers together to form a single cloth”

ABOVE Quantum's TP52 with panel laminates was very successful

RIGHT Running repairs to a Volvo Ocean 65's North 3Di genoa

manufacturers have gone down different paths. “When we brought out Millennium it was a totally new technology,” explains Peter Kay of OneSails. “They used heat-activated polymers to bond fabrics together without the use of glues or resins.

“With our latest 4T Forte sails we still use the same process as we did then, only we use a proprietary polyethylene fibre – similar to dyneema or spectra – which our parent company in Italy named STR Solid Stripes. Because there is no resin at all in the fibres – whether they be a standard aramid or STR Stripes – they remain dry throughout and do not firm up at all.” The sails are still made of a number of layers but on completion are pressurised and heated to activate a polymer, which bonds the layers together to form a single piece of cloth. OneSails claims this produces a more integrated laminate than any resin can do. It also claims that this means it can create membrane sails of unlimited size, not having to have a mould over which to lay the sails.

Also using polymers to create a single material is UK Sailmakers, which offers this in a range of different strength cloths, the strongest of which (Uni-Titanium) incorporates its own ‘Uni-Carbon’ layer – developed from the aerospace industry.

“Particularly with carbon materials like ours and those which other lofts use, shrinkage can be a major factor when resin is involved,” explains John Reivers of UK Sailmakers. “By using polymers we can avoid this.”

Although Uni-Titanium sails use heat and pressure-activated polymers, they also use a mould. “We don’t actually refer to it as a mould as it is a



PHOTO: MATT KNIGHTON/VOLVO OCEAN RACING/VOLVO OCEAN RACE

convex form that we use and is unique to us,” adds John. “We lay up in the ‘form’ which is shaped by the design computer and then pressurised (down to one bar) and heated, and then – and again this is unique to us – we flip it and pressurise and heat it again.”

Latest evolution

A total lack of resin is one way to go but North again selected a different route; to develop its own resin and fibre system that does not stiffen over time. This it calls its 3Di sails. Put simply the fibres are impregnated with North’s proprietary resin which is then laid by machine on to a mould before heat curing. This means the sails consist only of fibre and resin.

The fibres are laid down in a pre-programmed fashion to produce one sheet of material with various fibres, usually a combination of carbon and aramids – think of the process as being similar to a carbon-fibre or glassfibre hull layup but managing to make the finished product flexible.

Mostly the final fibres laid are protective to prevent abrasion but even these can be done away with to produce 3Di Raw. Their aim from the start was to produce a sail to the same weight as 3DLs and increase longevity, but 3Di Raw are lighter.

3Dis are currently seen on several of the biggest and most expensive programmes, and are proving very hard wearing with little deformation. Currently North is supplying the one design Volvo Ocean 65 fleet in the Volvo Ocean Race with 3Dis, and say they are seeing great success in terms of longevity.

“This is still very new technology,” explains Neil Mackley of North Sails. “We are still learning how far things can be pushed and have only just made it available to the public.” He adds that although 3Dis are currently available only on boats over 30ft he could see them coming ‘down-range’ in the coming years. He feels the only real issue at present is that the cost makes it economically unfeasible for a dinghy. ■



VX One sail testing at Grafham Grand Prix

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Dave Hall

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ABOVE OneSails 4TForte sails use the firm's own polyethylene fibres

RIGHT Dynamic Sails offers bespoke material packages, popular with dinghy sailors

Too strong?

As the industry progresses so the job of sail designers becomes a little different, particularly on the biggest boats. "If someone asked us to build a membrane package for a boat over 90ft I am not all that sure that we would," comments Nigel. "For someone like North it is ok as it has Sothorn Spars (under the same parent company) so it can put a package together. If we build membranes for really big boats, it could be hard to guarantee the rig wouldn't come down, such is the strength of modern sails."

Indeed this is something that John at UK Sailmakers says they have seen. "We do need to be careful about the amount of Uni-Carbon we put into the sails," he says. "It is so strong that if you put too much in you can end up breaking halyards or jib cars."

He adds that a top-of-the-range TP52 programme will look to be built stronger now thanks to the increased strength in sail materials, but most of us will just want to beef-up halyards

and so on. This, he says, is a small price to pay for the dramatic increase in speeds they have seen.

Many sailmakers we spoke to are building stretch back into areas of the sail due to the lack of flexibility in new fibres and it's curious that, today, we are almost dealing with the opposite problems to those in the 1950s.

This strength brings up another potential problem, with the idea that

dinghy sailors are somewhat different. Specifically the loads involved are reduced, sails must cover a broader range of conditions and are subject to less wear and tear.

"Dave Hall once built a suit of carbon membrane Fireball sails to try out," recalls Nigel at Hyde. "But he gave up on them claiming he was slower due to a lack of shape control."

But what all this development does



a lack of flexibility in materials can reduce the range of conditions for which the sail is suited. Going back to Austin Farrar's quote earlier, he talks about re-forming a stretchy sail as time wore on. This is far from ideal, but it does show how adaptable a sail could be, giving the sailors the option to force it into their preferred shape. With a sail that has no give, this is far harder to achieve and so use beyond the specified design range returns poor results.

But Neil at Norths insists this is not something they have found: "With 3Dis, the stronger the sail is, the better shape-holding it offers and the higher up the wind range it can be used."

Equally this strength allows for an increased flexibility in shape: "We can now put square tops on mainsails that are not fully battened," says Jeremy. "That is purely down to the strength of EPEX. We would never have considered that before."

Dinghy developments

Although laminates and membranes feature in the dinghy world and have done for many years, the needs of

offer is the option to create a truly unique package. Advances mean more options than ever for bespoke sails.

Dave Dobrijevic of Dynamic Sails, says: "Our recent custom string sails, using MXL multi-panel technology, allow you to decide the fibre layout and create a map of fibres across the sail. This gives enhanced stability higher up the wind range so the sail maintains its shape for a fraction of the weight."

"In truth, all sails are about compromise," Nigel concludes. "The biggest factor remains cost. If you had all the money in the world, you would probably want to buy a new sail every race as there is a very small difference after the first time you put it up. Our job as a sailmaker is to speak to clients, understand their expectations and provide something that will last as long as possible while maintaining the performance of the sail."

Perhaps that explains Dracon's ongoing popularity. Ben says: "It is cheap enough to replace often and stands up to the beating it takes remarkably well."

Fibre properties

	MODULUS	TENACITY	UV RESISTANCE	FLEX LOSS	COST
CARBON	2	1	1	4	2
ARAMIDS	4	4	3	3	4
DYNEEMA	2	3	3	2	3
PBO	1	2	2	1	1
VECTRAN	5	5	3	2	3

The above figures are illustrative only and not the result of testing

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“See what the dynamics
are on board, work out how the
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PERFORMANCE PLAYBOOK

Every keelboat team can benefit from a 'playbook'. For sailors joining the British Keelboat Academy, this is one of the first lessons they learn.

Andi Robertson reports 



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The 2014-2015 British Keelboat Academy is in full swing. The programme – a joint partnership between UKSA and the RYA – is designed as a step up into high level keelboat and offshore racing, open to young sailors aged 18-24.

Currently there are eight sailors on the Etchells programme, 15 on the inshore big boat programme, 17 in the one design group, and nine in the offshore group. The core of the programme is initially based around four winter training weekends, led by performance manager, Nigel King, and head coach, Ash Holmes. It brings together those transitioning from dinghies to keelboats, as well as sportsboat sailors and match racers. The BKA's unique Crewsearch programme also matches young sailors with decent, high-quality campaigns, essentially providing a stream of well-trained, motivated and committed sailors to owners, semi-pro and pro programmes.

The syllabus introduces a whole range of attributes, skills and approaches, which sailors are encouraged to continually evolve over their big boat sailing career. Many of these are 'soft' skills – such as teamwork, communication and personal management – rather than hard, 'how-to' skills, and are all things that will resonate with any keelboat sailor looking to raise their game.

Big boat dynamics

A sensible starting point for any team playbook is improving communication. It is, according to Nigel King, the glue that holds every team together. He says: "The first thing is to listen to what is going on. See what the dynamics are on board, work out how the communication chain is working at the time.

"Before you can improve the communication you have to know where it is at. How it is working at that moment? Try to work out where any breakdowns are. What information is missing? The more questions you ask, the better the answers. A classic situation occurs when the bowman does not know what is going on. Decide how can you improve the calls; work out the information that can be passed forwards so that everyone understands.

"When it comes to debriefing what happened, allow everybody

to have a voice. Discuss how it happened and why it happened.

"Allow everybody to have a say in that process, without it becoming personal. You end up in that place sometimes where people don't want to say something because they don't want to upset somebody. If it is about performance, and how to improve, then it is okay to say what you think, as long as you say it in a respectful manner. The whole team is interested in doing better, so ensure it's a non-blame culture. It's ok to be upset but you need to get from being upset to working out what you need to do."

Making the leap

The BKA sailors also use the playbook concept to encourage a logical, scientific approach to training, ensuring skills are repeatable through crew evolutions and from boat to boat, noting who does what and how during each manoeuvre, and how that changes with different situations.

King explains: "The big difference coming from dinghies and small keelboats is that, give or take a little, they are one design. You tend to get into the habit of sailing the boat as it is put in front of you.

"Instead, develop the habit of being creative in how you sheet sails to get them to do what you want. Be prepared to try something different, to play around with it and see how it works and then change it back and try something else. Experiment. A lot of teams get on the boat they are given and think, 'I can't sheet it out there because there are no blocks there'. So, can you change the sheeting angles, use different sheaves or change to multiple sheaves? It's ok to make mistakes in order to learn."

Getting it right is often a question of putting in the right preparation – which in itself is often an eye-opening concept for those starting out in keelboat sailing. Ash Holmes says: "Getting crew to take ownership of particular areas helps them to commit more. For instance, have one or two people committed to looking after the sails and making sure the right sails are on board; that's the trimmers usually. If you are the bowman, make sure the right spinnakers are on board, properly packed and ready to go. If you are nav or tactics make sure you have all the cards, the tides, weather – all the information for the day."



PHOTOS: INGRID ABERY PHOTOGRAPHY

ABOVE Successful race teams know that good comms enable proactive decisions

BELOW Communicate changes as they happen – especially in venues like the Solent



PHOTO: PAUL WYETH



PHOTO: PAUL WYETH

“If you have the bowman still on the bow, somehow that is seen as more acceptable”

ABOVE Defining roles takes the stress out at key pressure points, and enables strategic decisions to be made

Effective decision-making

Once on the water, the priority switches to decision-making, and how to go about achieving that in the most effective way. Holmes says: “We look at decision-making on the water as a team. That is something to be aware of. We focus on three types of decision – there are quick boat-on-boat decisions; ‘playing chicken’ decisions in tight spaces when someone has to give; and there is playing the odds – poker-playing decisions when you weigh up strategies around the course, the good and bad, deciding which way you are going to go and how far.

“We relate that to every day decisions, how the decisions are made, who the skipper is and how to influence these decisions. These are things that are not pushed out there much and we are trying to change that.”

One of the key pressure points on the race course when decisions matter most are at the start, as well as at leeward marks and gates. This is also where big opportunities open up. Holmes says: “Focus on boat manoeuvres, learning how the boat reacts when you need to accelerate and get off the line. Know the boat inside out; learn exactly how to make it accelerate.

“At leeward marks, the amount of late drops that go wrong means it’s very high risk. More gains can instead be made by setting up early. If you have the bowman still on the bow, someone inboard sorting out the sheets and weight off the rail then that is somehow seen as more acceptable than at other times. Instead, get the kite down early, get the crew hiking and do a decent rounding on the mark; you are more likely to pick up extra boat lengths or places, without stressing the crew.”

Optimising performance

It’s a balance. There are positions on board that require decision-making skills, and there are also those that require observation and communication skills. Ensure everyone buys into this, and knows the importance of focusing on their particular role. Holmes explains: “It is important to recognise changes as they happen, especially on the Solent; for instance, a sea breeze kicking in, or the change of tide from wind with tide to wind against tide. You’ll have a different sea state and the trimmers need to stay on top of that. That best happens when there’s a constant clear flow of information from the navigator and tactician through the trimmers, and with other people looking outside the boat for the changes in conditions. This set up allows you to be proactive rather than reactive.”

King is keen to emphasise that training is more valuable than racing, and its important to make the most of any opportunities that you may have. He advises: “First thing is, have a plan. You have to know what your plan is, what are you trying to achieve for the day? The second thing is, don’t make it too complicated – one or two things are enough for a day. If you try and work on 15 things it’s guaranteed you won’t get half of them done and you will end up not doing any of them well.

“Have a plan that is short and sweet, focusing on a couple of key areas that you know you need to work on. Go out and execute that. You may have to stop, debrief and change, then refine.

“Don’t try to go out and do four hours of one thing, say gybing, as the last hour you will be fried. Break it into small chunks, followed by a short debrief to ask, what have we learned? What have we achieved? Make notes so it is documented and locked in. Most people go out and try to do tacking, gybing, running, reaching, upwind hoists, dropping – but you will do none of them very well. So go out and say, today we are working on tacking, we will do it until we are totally happy and we have learned what we needed to do.” By having a couple of clear focus points, progress will naturally follow. ■

7 steps to improve as a team

- Be organised! Organised individuals together form an organised crew.
- Write your playbooks for each manoeuvre – detail timings, movements, roles, comms – so they are smooth, efficient and repeatable as crew or boat changes occur.
- Agree realistic targets, aims and objectives, then, as a crew, define pathways to get there and break down the processes needed.
- Improve crew dynamics and performance; take responsibility for your role and work 100 per cent.
- Debrief as a priority. Be objective and even-minded and make sure everyone has a voice.
- Go through the motions of manoeuvres such as hoists and drops with a dry run on the dock.
- Define and streamline the chain of command and flow of information.



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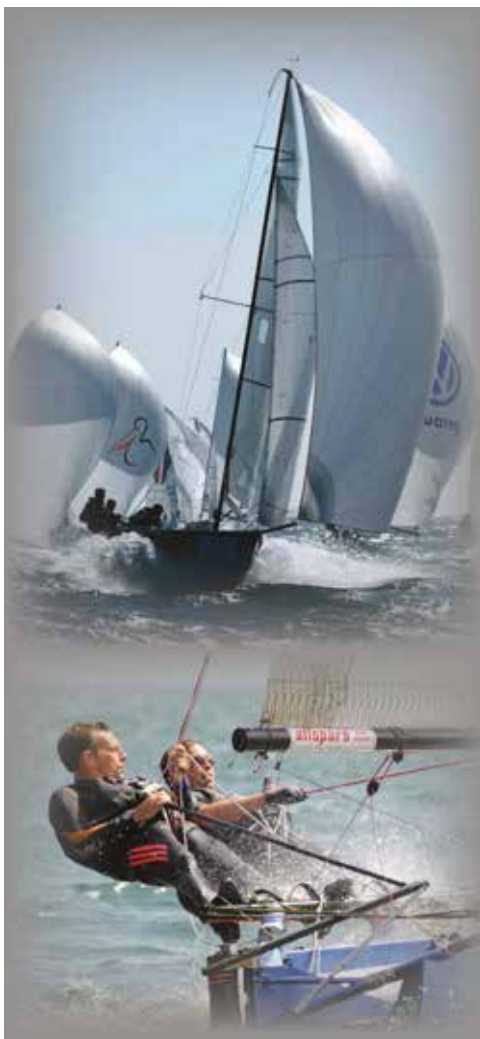
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TRAPEZE TECHNIQUES

2012 Olympic 470 silver medallist **Stuart Bithell** shares his winning advice for trapeze crews



The smallest of changes to your stance and positioning can make huge improvements to your trapezing technique. I remember racing in the 49er on Lake Garda at a time when there were no rules as to what you could or couldn't do when trapezing, and being shocked by the teams who

were standing on each other's shoulders to enable them to move even further away from the boat.

Luckily, you are not allowed to do this anymore! Winning or losing comes down to your technique in different types of wind and your ability to move at speed across the boat.

Flat wiring - key to speed

Flat wiring allows trapeze crews to achieve maximum leverage and therefore increase boat speed through the water.

Perfecting and practising this position is often the key to success.

Picture yourself sitting in the middle of the boat – that is when you have no leverage and little effect on boat speed. Now picture yourself trapezing on your tiptoes, exactly 90 degrees from standing up straight on the side of the boat, low and parallel to the water below you, reaching and stretching one arm as high over your head as possible. This is the position we are aiming for as often as mother nature (and the helm) allow us.

Assuming there is enough wind for the boat to be fully powered up, or even over-powered:

- 1** Position yourself as low as you can without hitting the waves; you may have to adjust your height on the wire to accommodate the different sea states.
- 2** When sailing upwind, stand on your tiptoes with your feet as close together as possible to make yourself taller. A certain amount of balance and calf muscle strength is required to do this.
- 3** If conditions are difficult and it is very windy and wavy, separate your feet a little bit for more balance - but no more than shoulder-width apart.
- 4** A nice technique is to turn your front



foot outwards (still on your tiptoes if possible). By doing this you will naturally rotate your shoulders a bit so you are facing the front of the boat, and more importantly this means you can see where you are going – always a bonus when racing!

- 5** Another advanced way for competitors to maximise leverage is to actually stretch one arm out over your shoulder – it is not possible in all classes, but in the 470 it is quite feasible. It looks funny, but you would be amazed how much difference it makes.



PHOTOS: BRITISH SAILING TEAM

TOP TIP: As a general rule, you should be thinking of getting as much weight away from the boat as you can. Experiment with your stance and positioning; do whatever you are comfortable with doing to achieve a flat wiring position.

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RIGHT Using your knees helps to manage trim through waves and chop

PHOTO: PAUL WETH/VOLVO SAILING



Fast tacks - wire-to-wire

Flat wiring and correct positioning on the wire is one of the primary factors for maximising boat speed and can make the difference between winning and losing on the racecourse. It follows, then, that wire-to-wire tacking is the ultimate way of maintaining boat speed during a tack by transferring your weight from one side of the boat to the other as quickly and effectively as possible, going from flat-wiring on one tack to the exact same position on the other.

1 Be prepared; have your hook height set ahead of time for when you want to tack. This will allow you to get into your optimum flat-wiring position quickly and without any delays. Efficiency with this will allow the boat to get back up to full speed in the shortest time possible.

2 There is a fine balance between steering the boat and the speed of your movement through the tack. It is key to be able to judge the timings and the speed of the manoeuvre.

3 In the 49er, as the boat is quite wide, I am able to run across the boat as fast as possible and my helm, John Pink, will steer based on my speed across the boat.

4 Different classes will vary on how this process is done. In the 470, for example, because the boat moves more slowly through the water, the helm will dictate

the speed of the turn and the crew will judge when to move and how quickly.

5 Aim to get to a point where you need hardly any time at all to prepare for a tack; as soon as you start fidgeting on the wire, the boat is slowing down - even though you may not realise it.

6 In the 470, I would throw the jib sheet tail in the water in front of me, so that I could concentrate on the turn of the boat and ensure the jib sheets were consistently in the same position each time we tacked.



PHOTO: BRITISH SAILING TEAM

TOP TIPS:

■ Communication is key. The helm is ultimately in control of turning the boat, so between you, decide on a phrase to ask and confirm when you are ready to make the manoeuvre. A simple 'Ready about?' 'Ready!' has always worked for us. Agree on a process and stick to it.

■ Build up consistency. Get the processes of the tack in place before slowly building up the speed as your technique improves, so that a perfect wire-to-wire tack becomes second nature.

■ Practice makes perfect! It is always useful to practice your tacking skills with other boats. This will increase your awareness of how well you are tacking, and what processes of your technique you need to perfect.

How to win

RIGHT The simple trick of turning your front foot outwards gives an optimum stance upwind

PHOTO: PAUL WRETH/NOVO SAILING



PHOTOS: BRITISH SAILING TEAM



Perfecting your technique in marginal conditions

Mastering the mechanics in marginal conditions – when your weight is heavier than the power of the wind – will give you a great advantage in becoming one of the fastest boats on the water.

The challenge is to find the balance between how much and how quickly you can physically move your body weight, and how much energy you need to let out of the sails. The top sailors are quick at reacting to gusts – and even quicker reacting to lulls.

1 Try to find a position on the wire where you have maximum range to balance the boat. For example, you don't want to be too low on the wire in case you get stuck and are not then able to get back into the boat quickly when a lull hits.

2 Be prepared to sacrifice a perfect flat-wiring position to ensure you are in a position to be smooth and effective at keeping the boat flat. This usually means raising yourself much higher on the wire.

3 Once in a comfortable position with good range of motion, you can bend and straighten your knees as a primary way of controlling boat trim.

4 If using your knees is not enough to control boat trim due to conditions, then you will have to move up and down on the wire adjuster as well.

5 In more extreme cases, you may even need to unhook from the harness and sit on the side of the boat. Aspire to be 'a cat with silk slippers' when doing this!

Another way of sailing in these conditions is to keep your bodyweight in the same position and trim the sails around your weight. While this is not the best technique, what often works well is a compromise, so a little bit of weight movement and a little bit of sail movement – this can be particularly fast when there are waves or chop. To do this well takes a lot of time in the boat, plus good teamwork and communication.

TOP TIP: Always aim to feel comfortable with your position on the wire; the focus is to be able to get in and out smoothly and quickly, whatever position you are in and whatever the wind may do! Fast reactions will win you places.

Equipped for the task – choosing the right harness

Equipment-wise, your trapeze harness is key. Most importantly, it needs to be comfortable. Some people like to use ones with back support; you can get harnesses with battens down

the back for this purpose. I have a cleat on my shoulder strap and a little pulley near my navel, which means that I can adjust the straps conveniently on the water. The pulley allows me to rotate my

shoulders easily, which is handy in the 49er where, as a crew, you hoist the spinnaker and do a lot of twisting in various positions.

There are also different weights of harnesses; you can get very

lightweight or heavier ones, which can be helpful.

If you are a bit light for the boat you are sailing, you can always get a slightly heavier harness or vice versa.

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PHOTO: CREWSWEEPER

SAFETY GADGETS

POCKET-SIZED INNOVATION

Leaps in technology are enabling race crew to take responsibility for their own safety. **Georgie Corlett-Pitt** investigates

It's becoming easier than ever before for sailors to take steps to ensure their own safety, giving each of us an extra level of reassurance, regardless of which boat we may be racing on any given day. No, it's not just that health and safety has gone mad; more that technological advances mean that personal safety gadgets are smaller, lighter and more affordable than ever before. Just as it's the mark of a safety-savvy sailor to carry a good quality safety knife or multi-tool, it's becoming second nature for sailors to carry gadgets with them that they can rely on, and that, in an emergency, really can make all the difference.

It's a trend that's being propelled by the industry. Alistair Hackett, general manager of Ocean Safety, says: "Awareness of personal safety is increasing amongst sailors; people are giving more and more consideration to their own safety

and taking responsibility for that. A lot of that has been driven by peer pressure and by stories that people pick up on through the media.

"Manufacturers have gone a long way towards designing lifejackets that are comfortable and that people want to wear. Taking your own lifejacket on board has become a habit now for most sailors. Attention is now turning beyond that, to developing products that help identify and locate a person in distress, and increasing the chances of finding them. After all, to be able to rescue someone you need to be able to locate them.

"Technology has taken a big leap, even in the last five years. 10 years ago LED torches and personal distress beacons simply weren't around. Now we have that technology and people are developing different concepts of 'come and find me'. Sailors now have a good range of options."

Who's your rescuer?

GPS-based personal locator beacons are possibly the biggest area of development in the last five years. There are now several pocket-sized, waterproof and ruggedised options to consider, falling into two main camps: personal AIS beacons, and Personal Locator Beacons (PLBs). The two types employ different methods of raising the alarm, so ultimately you need to ask yourself, who are you most likely to be rescued by?

On the one hand, PLBs use miniaturised EPIRB technology, so when activated, they directly alert the international search and rescue authorities, via a dedicated global frequency. PLBs are therefore generally recommended as a last resort, when all efforts at self-rescue have failed. For that reason, they make good sense for those sailing with inexperienced crew, or those sailing

ABOVE Safety awareness is moving beyond lifejackets, with a new generation of gadgets

short-handed, particularly the further offshore you are likely to venture.

In terms of ongoing developments, PLBs are expected to become even more versatile in the near future. Sean McCrystal, marketing manager for the McMurdo Group, says: “The buzzword now is MEOSAR, which stands for ‘medium earth orbit search and rescue’. Later models of MEOSAR beacon, which are currently two to four years away, will feature instant contact with search and rescue operators, the ability to cancel a distress message after sending it, along with a call-back signal so you know your distress message has been received.

“MEOSAR satellites will be able to pick up any of the current generation of 406MHz PLBs or EPIRBs so, reassuringly, products bought now will not be redundant in a few years.”

Of the options currently available, the smallest PLB is Ocean Signal’s

a VHF DSC alert in its transmission, which gives another option for alerting vessels without AIS receivers.

VHF DSC alerts also inspired the thinking behind Sea Marshall’s Maritime Survivor Locating Device, an alternative water-activated device designed to be integrated with a lifejacket, that transmits GPS co-ordinates to DSC-enabled VHF’s within range, as well as a channel 16 voice message to alert non-DSC radios.

So whilst we are already seeing VHF and AIS combined, could we ultimately see AIS and PLB functionalities combined into a single device? It’s a question that the experts at McMurdo are frequently asked. Sean explains: “The answer lies in the hands of the standards authorities. At the minute the requirements for storage life and activation length define the type approval of what a PLB is; the addition of AIS would require an impact on power consumption and would be



LEFT PLBs and AIS beacons are similar in size, the difference comes in who you want to rescue you



BELOW The MOBOS is the latest solution to hit the marine market

BOTTOM A number of gadgets are designed to integrate with lifejackets

“Attention is turning beyond lifejackets to locating a person in distress”

PLB1, just 75x51mm, while the widest choice of models is offered by ACR. McMurdo’s Kannad brand is also popular. And all are more affordable than you may think when you consider the benefits; prices for basic models start in the region of £160.

The alternative – personal AIS beacons – come in at just a fraction more of the cost and are similarly ruggedised, waterproof and pocket-sized. For those sailing in busy inshore waters or with an experienced crew, there’s a strong argument for carrying a personal AIS beacon over a PLB. Once activated, a distress signal with GPS data is sent to all AIS enabled vessels within VHF range, so a localised rescue can be effected straight away.

Personal AIS beacons also have the advantage of semi-automatic activation. Both Kannad’s SafeLink R10 SRS (Survivor Recovery System), which was the first personal AIS to launch, and now also Ocean Signal’s MOB1 can be professionally fitted to a lifejacket and will activate on inflation.

Ocean Signal’s product also includes

unlikely to get approval if included in a PLB. Our recommendation is that they are treated as complementary, AIS for localised rescue, PLB for contacting the search and rescue authorities.”

Other beacon options

Away from the big AIS vs PLB debate, it is worth noting that there are other types of personal distress beacons available – but not necessarily ones that you can carry independently, as they rely in some way or form on additional gadgetry.

The very latest product to hit the market is MOBOS (Man Overboard Operating System), developed from a similar dive product by German manufacturer, Seareq. The MOBOS device works on Ultra High Frequency, UHF, needing a shorter antenna than VHF, and the pocket-sized device is automatically triggered to transmit an alert to a receiver (that can be portable or fixed) on board.

Another nifty gadget worth considering would be Garmin’s Quatix, a GPS-based wrist-watch, which, among many other useful





ABOVE The industry is pushing new ideas behind 'come and find me' safety products

BELOW Multifunctional products, such as Garmin's Quatix, are leading the trend

race features, includes an automatic wireless MOB activation function, whereby the Quatix will automatically send an MOB alert to the chartplotter if a wireless link between the watch and the chartplotter is broken – based on proximity. However, an NMEA transceiver is required.

There are a number of smaller key-fob-style standalone MOB products offering wireless proximity alerts that also rely on a centralised unit on board and a networked system to be able to transmit an emergency waypoint. But, looking ahead, overall trends in technology make it likely that any new products introduced to the market will, like the Quatix, be multifunctional.

In the spotlight

The humble torch may seem a relatively straightforward device, but it's one that can prove vital. ISAF's offshore racing recommendations state offshore crew should each carry a personal strobe light that can double in use as a search light.

Thanks to the advent of highly efficient LED technology and rechargeable Li-ion batteries, such

devices are more compact, more reliable and offer a longer-range, brighter light than ever before. A variety of such personal lights can be fitted to lifejackets, whether for automatic or manual activation.

But some of the greatest excitement currently centres on an all-new award-winning product that has been developed by Exposure Marine from lights used in the cycling market. The MOB Torch uses Motion Control Technology, which automatically senses motion when thrown through the air, as well as an LED strobe light (designed to be visible up to 5nm) which automatically activates in contact with the water. The torch then floats at an angle designed to illuminate the water around the MOB. Its powerful beam will last for up to 20 hours, exceeding the SOLAS requirement of five hours.

Again, it's a multi-use product – with search light, spotlight and inspection modes – that has been a big hit with current Volvo Ocean Race teams and which Charlie Mill, managing director at Ocean Safety, describes as a game-changer. He says: "The best products are those that will work with minimum intervention, or with some sort of automatic function. The more uses a product has, the more chance you have of having it on you when you need it."

New generation flares

Flares are another product type witnessing technological inroads. Earlier this year, ISAF removed its recommendation to carry white handheld flares on board yachts racing offshore. (Red handheld flares and orange smokes are still recommended, as are white rocket-illuminating



ABOVE Exposure Marine's mini XS-R personal torch is one of a new generation of LED products



LEFT The 'game-changing' MOB Torch

flares.) The alternative – a new non-pyrotechnic product, known as the Electronic Visual Distress Flare – has the benefits of being safer to operate, test and dispose of. Already popular is the Odeo Mk 3 Flare. But at roughly the same size, if not larger than, a traditional handheld flare, these are far from pocket-sized and so until 'personal' products develop, for now, they are best reserved for grab bags.

How you use it

When it comes to picking which gadgets are right for you – until a device is invented that combines all the functionality discussed here – it boils down to personal circumstance and what sort of situation you're likely to find yourself in.

"None of the products here should be considered in isolation," says Alistair. "The absolute key with any product is understanding how it works, and what the technology will do when it is activated."

"If, for example, you have a personal AIS beacon, make sure the rest of the crew understand what format the alert signal will take and how that will help them find you. If you have a handheld device with a GPS transmitter, you need to remember to hold it without blocking the GPS transmission with your hand."

"Have a clear plan of how your gadgets will work, and how the plan will work for your crew. Know how your chosen gadgets will work in a real situation, not just in the marina, but how they will work when you are having the ultimate bad day."

Of course, no-one wants that bad day to come, but as any good Scout will tell you, it's best to be prepared. ■



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Garmin SOS safety assist

Garmin has announced its latest free software update, which will see a range of innovative features made available on several of its marine devices.

This update is available on a number of the company's multi-function displays (MFDs), chartplotters and combination plotters across their GPSMAP and echoMAP marine product lines. Among the new features included in this update is Auto Guidance 2.0, the import of waypoints, routes and tracks via GPX, advanced sailing features, enhanced safety operations, and more. RRP: Free garmin.com

Toby Heppell reviews a selection of the most exciting new kit launching for the 2015 season

Kit innovations



Crewsaver Crewfit Sport

Crewsaver is rightly proud of its new Crewfit Sport range of lifejackets. These figure-hugging garments allow for increased ease of movement and, perhaps most importantly, prevent the sailor from getting hooked up on guardrails, errant sheets and other hazards. RRP: £60 crewsaver.com



Zhik Powerpads

The new Zhik Powerpads II are designed to wear underneath your wetsuit, meaning there is nothing external that can snag.

The pre-shaped pads have four internal batons, which provide hiking support behind the leg, and also flex to conform to the shape of your leg, creating a snug and comfortable fit. They can be fitted with an optional foam pad, which inserts into a neoprene pocket and creates extra height off the side decks. RRP: £89 zhik.com

Suzuki Long Shaft

Having put a significantly longer shaft on some of its higher powered outboards, Suzuki has now added the option to its 2.5hp unit. This will be particularly useful for small sportboats where props popping out of the water on the way to a start can be a nuisance. RRP: £640 suzukimarine.com



Spinlock buoyancy aids

After revolutionising the keelboat lifejacket world, famous deck gear supplier, Spinlock has released its first buoyancy aid range, featuring the Wing (pictured) and the Foil models. Already the new additions have got sailors talking, with the Ben Ainslie Racing team sporting the streamlined buoyancy aids during early testing in Bermuda and on the Solent while sailing their foiling AC45. RRP: £65 spinlock.co.uk





Henri Lloyd Elite smock

The all-new Henri Lloyd Elite Offshore Racer Smock is the latest high performance keelboat kit. The smock is built to withstand the worst conditions imaginable. Henri Lloyd claims the material from which the smock is made is 30 per cent lighter and 20 per cent more breathable than existing best-in-class garments. RRP: £475 henrilloyd.com

Reckmann furler

Designed to be retro-fitted seamlessly with existing forestay systems, the new Reckmann MF Furling System will be available this spring with both above-deck and under-deck versions suitable for rod and wire forestays. RRP: TBC advancedrigging.co.uk

Optimist Megastep

The Optimist Megastep looks likely to be the latest and greatest bit of kit in the Optimist world. The Megastep is a mast step that allows fore-aft adjustment of the mast foot in order to rake the rig backwards and forwards. The adjustment allows the maximum permitted forward and aft positions for the Optimist mast. RRP: £78 megastep.co.uk

Magic Marine Ace

The Ace wetsuit claims to be one of the fastest drying on the market. When we were introduced to the concept in the cold of February it seemed like a very good idea indeed! RRP: £235.99 magicmarineshop.co.uk



TRIED & TESTED: Ion Air Pro 3 video camera

Video is an important tool, both for filming sailing and improving performance, *writes Cadet coach, Jodie Green*. With this in mind I took the Ion Air Pro 3 along to Weymouth with the UK Cadet squad on a cold day in February.

The camera comes fully waterproof from the off, without a separate waterproof housing but remains pleasantly bulk-free in spite of this. The memory card and sockets for cables are located on the back end of the cylindrical camera with a solid locking system that leaves little doubt it will remain water free.

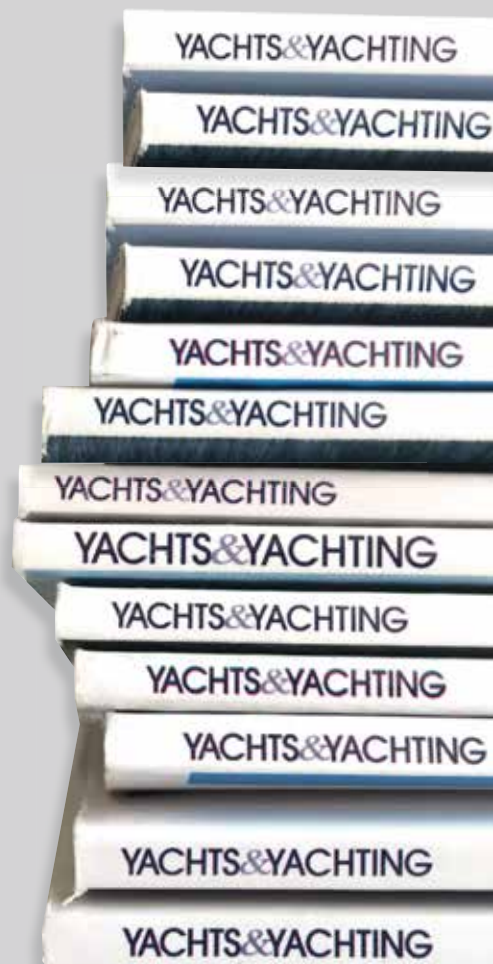
The camera features all the details you might expect: high-definition, wide-angle lens, decent still images, and a vast array of mounting options. But the real plus is its large, clear easy-to-use



controls. A rubberized on/off button is easy on cold, gloved hands, as is a big rubber slide to start and stop recording. Even better, the camera vibrates when turned on and does the same, though for slightly longer, when recording is started. Again, this is really handy in cold weather. RRP: £299.99 uk.ioncamera.com

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ENOUGH?





New boats

This month, a TP52 for all, a cruiser set to change the game, and a simple, singlehanded dinghy

IRC52

Since the launch of the TP52, many of the top-performing boats have been sold on to owners with an interest in IRC racing – usually as the boats near the end of their competitive life span in the highly professional class racing.

But with the TP52 rule not being optimised for IRC these often require modifications to be competitive on handicap. And even then you still have an out-and-out racer with barely the scantest nod towards comfort.

With this in mind, Premier Composite Technologies, along with renowned design office Judel/Vrolijk – responsible for a number of winning TP52s – has come up with the

IRC52. This iteration contains many of the best aspects of the TP52 class rule in a package that is both competitive in IRC and that can be cruised in a more comfortable – but still high performance – fashion.

Premier Composite Technologies, which will be building the IRC52, says that she has been created to accommodate two sail plans. In racing mode she carries a large square-topped main, running backstays, and a wide selection of headsails. In cruising or delivery mode she may be sailed with just five or six crew, thanks to a smaller mainsail with conventional roach, roller jib and

cruising chute set from the bow pad-eye.

Both aft stays can be fixed, and the bowsprit can be removed for deliveries or cruising. There are options for an electric/hydraulic winch package, or deck pedestal grinder, depending on the type of racing planned.

LOA	15.85m
Beam	4.42m
Draft	3.6m
Displacement	7,290kg
<i>Racing sail area:</i>	
Upwind	164sq m
Downwind	368sq m



📍 Melges 14

The singlehanded dinghy market seems awash with new launches in recent years, with both the RS Aero and Devotti D-Zero both generating impressive sales.

The latest newcomer, the Melges 14, was designed by Reichel Pugh and looks to be targeting a similar market. Much like the

other two, it has a choice of sails, a full rig at 9.1sq m and a smaller rig at 7.8sq m. It has carbon mast and boom and looks to be a simple boat to set up. Melges says the large open cockpit will provide relatively dry sailing (no bailing) and the boat is suitable for one design racing or fun family sailing.

Melges has a strong reputation, particularly in the USA where the company is based, and has, over the years, launched many successful designs; most popular in Europe have been the Melges 24 and 32 keelboats.

LOA	4.267m
Beam	1.584m
Weight	54.43kg
Sail area:	
Full	9.1sq m
Mid	7.8sq m

📍 Bente 24

Could the Bente 24 be the yacht to save a generation of sailors from becoming lost to the sport? The designers of this innovative 24-footer certainly think so.

Tired of seeing so many of their friends leave the sport in their late 20s or early 30s due to the expense, Stephan Boden, a sailing writer and filmmaker, and designer Alexander Vrolijk, son of prolific naval architect Rolf from Judel/Vrolijk, decided to take things into their own hands and design an affordable boat to inspire a generation.

Just 10 months after their initial conversation over a bottle of burgundy they had their first boat hot off the production line and were exhibiting at the Düsseldorf Boat Show. Principally the boat has been designed to be as cheap as possible with the base package starting at just 25,000 Euros (approx £18,100) on the water, including rig and sails and keel, but little else.

"Too many small boats have everything in as standard. Things that nobody needs," says Steffan Boden. "People want to go sailing and on the water you don't need that much stuff around you. Last year I saw a new 25ft cruiser with a huge wooden



construction to hold a CD-radio. Who needs a CD-radio on board, in times when your music and radio is on your smartphone? This stuff costs money and adds weight."

The pair worked with designers at the University of Design, Hanover, many them young and with little or no experience of sailing, but Boden says this let them be more open-minded about new ideas and concepts.

LOA	7.55m
Beam	2.75m
Draft	1.5m (1.8m)
Displacement	1350kg (1200kg)
Main	20sq m (24sq m)
Jib	12sq m (13.5sq m)

Specs in brackets show optional upgrades. ■



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Supernova Mk2e

Jeremy Evans takes a look at what Phil Morrison's re-vamp of the Supernova has done for this popular singlehander, now in the hands of Hartley Boats

The Supernova, one of the most vibrant singlehanded racing classes, has recently undergone a major overhaul. The class was first launched in 1996, designed and built by Mark Giles of Giles Reinforced Plastics as a larger development of his Lightning 368 singlehander.

Hartley Boats, renowned for revitalising Ian Proctor's classic dinghies, took over manufacture in 2004 and has now decided the best way to ensure a long term future for the Supernova is an extensive make-over.

Hull, deck and rig

★★★★★☆☆☆☆

First up, Hartley Boats reduced the weight of the polyester sandwich Mk2 hull by 12kg, and asked Phil Morrison to redesign the cockpit with more comfortable decks for hiking, uncluttered floor and open transom to provide immediate self-draining.

SPECIFICATIONS

Designer	Mark Giles
Length	4.3m
Beam	1.5m
Kevlar mainsail	8.0sq m
Hull weight fully fitted	50kg
Construction	Epoxy sandwich with internal stiffening
PY	1070



Two years ago, construction had been uprated to epoxy sandwich with internal bulkheads, which is stiffer and stronger with 'bullet proof' outer skin. The class is renowned for accommodating a wide weight range, from 65 to 100kg, and the fleet includes sailors from ages 14 to 72.

While the rig looks much the same as an original Supernova, it's been updated with a Kevlar laminate sail and more sophisticated controls – kicker, clew outhaul and cunningham have been joined by a fully adjustable forestay to rake the mast forward downwind and aft upwind, plus optional adjustable lowers provide extra control over the bottom part of the rig. Hartley estimates that a carbon mast would add almost £1,000 to the cost of a new boat for a small increase in performance, so unsurprisingly are sticking with reliable aluminium spars.

Under sail

★★★★★☆☆☆☆

Despite its light weight, the Supernova is not recommended for roofrack sailing with its one-part mast. With purpose-built trolley and trailer, it's no problem to step or un-step the light mast singlehandedly, with a possible trail-to-sail time of little more than 30 minutes when setting up this simple yet sophisticated boat.

When you step on board to go sailing, the re-vamped open cockpit is a delight with an expanse of uncluttered space, high boom, comfortable side decks for sitting or hiking, nice dry floor with excellent non-slip and toe strap right by your feet, plus daggerboard and sail controls immediately to hand.

The 8 square-metre fully-battened laminate sail reliably packs a punch, driving a 50kg hull plus its crew. Lighter sailors can depower most of the sail with a beautifully bent mast in stronger winds, while heavier sailors can put full power into the sail with a straight mast in lighter winds.

It will take time and experimentation to learn how the controls function best, working towards perfect boat balance with a user-friendly rig.

The bottom line is that the latest incarnation of the Supernova is easy to sail, a lot of fun, very responsive and will reward with a blast on a breezy reach, but like many



performance dinghies the challenge comes in sailing superbly well and consequently the standard at the top of the racing fleet is high.

Verdict

★★★★★☆☆☆☆

Just ahead of this year's RYA Suzuki Dinghy Show, order book time for a new Supernova (race ready from £5,995 inc VAT) was three months plus. Second-hand boats were gold dust, indicating a flourishing class backed by a strong association that oversees a friendly UK-wide fleet. Some 70 plus boats are expected at the nationals this summer.

It's straightforward to summarise the attractions of the Supernova. All versions have been built to last, not least the latest Mk2e, which combines the benefits of epoxy hull and deck with a totally modern cockpit and powerful but easily managed rig suitable for a wide range of crew weights and skills. Despite the sophistication, the boat is a straightforward one design that is affordable and cheap to own – a sail that was two years old was used to win last year's nationals, demonstrating that you don't have to keep spending to sail very fast. ■



1 New rig and Kevlar main 2 Complex controls 3 Plentiful power drives a light hull 4 30 minutes from trailer to launch 5 Capsize recovery proved very manageable 6 Powered up for performance across all weight ranges



COMPARISONS



Laser

Heavier hull with less ergonomic cockpit and basic rig controls – but on the upside, you can race a Laser almost anywhere worldwide.

Length 4.23m

Beam 1.37m

Standard mainsail 7.06sq m

Hull weight fully fitted 58kg



RS Aero 9 or 7

Smaller, lighter, flightier and faster with its big rig; offers similar speed around the course with its mid-size rig.

Length 4.0m

Beam 1.4m

Standard mainsail 8.9sq m

Hull weight fully fitted 49kg

ANSWER BACK

From: Mark Hartley, Director, Hartley Boats Ltd
Thanks to Jeremy and team for their thorough test of our great boat. The Supernova has become a stalwart class for those wanting close, competitive racing with an extremely friendly association; running regular race training days. We build all our boats with the simple aim to delight our customers. Longevity and reliability are key to us achieving this. We guarantee that in the Supernova, sailors have a boat that will remain competitive and delight for many years. Call us for new and second hand options, or to book a test sail.

Contact: hartleyboats.com

Thanks to Peter Smith and his team at East Anglian Sea School for providing facilities for this test.



Race to the sun

Many of the great race weeks around the world are best experienced by chartering a boat. **Rupert Holmes** offers advice

The UK may lay claim to the world's oldest regatta in Aberdeen Asset Management Cowes Week – still going strong after 189 years – but the Caribbean is where most sailors' minds turn to at this time of year. There are few things in life better than racing under tropical sun with the benefit of cool trade winds, reliably around 15-25 knots, with a lavish après-race party scene to follow. And it's now almost 50 years since the first Antigua Race Week, which set the scene for the legendary experience that Caribbean regattas are renowned for.

Given a much wider choice of events in the region today, the regatta, which starts on the last Sunday of April, is smaller than in its heyday, but remains the grandfather of Caribbean regattas, offering top-notch racing.

Other popular events with keen racing sailors include the BVI Spring Regatta and Sailing Festival, held the week before Easter, and the Heineken St Maarten Regatta, in March.

While it's possible to charter full-on race boats, most competitors tend to choose the easier and more economic option of a standard charter bareboat. However, don't be lulled into a false sense of security about the standard of competition – it's perfectly possible you will be up against some very good sailors, including Olympic medallists.

As spring turns to summer the focus tends to move to the Mediterranean, with key events including the Copa del Rey in Palma, Mallorca at the beginning of August, the biennial Rolex Swan Cup in Porto Cervo, Sardinia in early September and Les Voiles de

St Tropez at the end of that month.

Meanwhile, closer to home there's Cowes Week – again where a large number of boats, from the smaller dayboats to larger IRC racers, are available for charter – as well as perennially popular events such as Falmouth Week and Ramsgate Week.

As winter approaches the opportunities again move further afield, including Asia's fastest-growing regatta, the China Cup, held at the end of October in the waters of Shenzhen and Hong Kong.

In December, the long-established Phuket King's Cup, in Thailand still has a strong following, with 91 entries in 2014. Even further afield, January sees the Bay of Islands Sailing Week, one of New Zealand's largest yachting events, with 12 classes, from sportsboats to TP52s.

MAIN PICTURE At nearly 50 years old, Antigua Race Week is the grandfather of Caribbean regattas

Off jet-setting? Here's how to be a charter champ...

1 Schedule time to practice when you get to the venue. Even if you've sailed there before this will help you get accustomed to the race area, the boat and working together effectively as a crew.

2 If racing a bareboat, also allow time to remove the bimini and sprayhood before racing and to move the anchor off the bow.

3 Mark settings as soon as you can – chances are your boat will have no markings for even the most basic of settings such as halyard tension. However, it only takes a roll of tape and a few minutes to mark basic settings. Duct tape can be applied ahead of the clutches so you can write on that with a marker pen, rather than on the boat itself.

4 Even if you're lucky enough to find a bareboat with fairly new sails, don't expect them to set well compared with those of a raceboat. Upwind you need to aim for speed, not height.

5 Learn from your mistakes – just as with racing at home, it's the teams that are best able to adapt to the new conditions that will always come out on top. Analyse what you might have done better, as well as celebrating (and remembering) good moves.

6 Check the boat over thoroughly at the outset. Whether it's a winch that needs servicing, or a chafed halyard that's liable to break, the earlier you can bring any problems to the attention of the charter operator, the greater chance there is of it being fixed before problems occur on the racecourse.

7 Clean the bottom. Unless you know the boat has been specifically race-prepared, it's likely that the bottom won't be perfectly clean. Check for prescriptions in the notice of race or sailing instructions, as well as any local legal requirements before doing so.

8 Pack the right personal kit. As well as sun protection, don't forget a fleece and lightweight foul-weather gear – even for warm-water inshore racing.

9 Take a bag of basic spares – you can do a lot with shackles, tape, a few blocks and some thin Dyneema line. It's also worth taking your favourite nav kit – if you don't know what equipment the boat will have, then a hand-held VHF, GPS and hand-bearing compass can be very helpful.

10 Find out as much as you can about the local wind conditions. In particular looking for lifts or headers around headlands and the extent of the wind shadow in the lee of any high ground. It's also worth checking out the diurnal variation in the wind strength – in some locations there's a very marked increase during the day that is often predictable. Work out if the weather is really doing what it's expected to at that time of the year; local sailors will tell you about any seasonal anomalies.

11 Even if you're racing in the Mediterranean or the Caribbean, don't rule out the possibility of strong currents. Granted, you won't need to modify your strategy for them as much as Solent sailors do, but a knot of stream off a headland, or an inshore eddy, will hand the local boats an advantage if you don't know about it. ▶

FAR LEFT Antigua Race Week sets the standard with its competitive programme

LEFT AND BELOW A mix of sun, fun and racing at the BVI Spring Regatta



“It's the teams best able to adapt to new conditions who'll always come out on top”



FROM TOP Asian success story, the China Cup; relaxed at Antigua Race Week

RIGHT, FROM TOP The St Maarten Regatta is a firm favourite with pedigree race yachts; many regattas attract a high standard of sailor

Stretch your horizons

When we think of chartering a boat for a regatta week it's all too easy to think in terms of the kind of craft we might usually sail. But race week chartering means some of the world's largest and most spectacular racing yachts can be an option, such as Mike Slade's 100ft *Leopard 3*. On board, guest crew can race alongside professional sailors with backgrounds in the America's Cup and Volvo Ocean Race. Similarly, Antigua-based Miramar Sailing offers either whole-boat charter, or the chance to buy a berth, on its Volvo 60 *Cuba Libre* over events which include Antigua Sailing Week, Cork Week and Les Voiles de St Tropez, plus a host of RORC races.

12 Study the sailing instructions carefully. Yes, we know they rarely make interesting reading, but many a great result has been lost through avoidable and basic errors. The solution is to make sure there are at least two people on board who have spent time digesting the SIs and the implications of any unusual requirements. Check for amendments before leaving the dock each morning.

13 Sail conservatively – of course you want to be fast, but taking big risks is generally counter-productive. This is especially important if you're sailing a larger and much more powerful boat than you're accustomed to, or if you're in a crowded bareboat fleet that may be populated by less experienced sailors. Collisions or groundings will spoil your day and your series, and may also cause you to lose the substantial

damage deposit on a bareboat. Similarly, banging a corner on the beat may yield one good result, but it's unlikely to do much for your overall score.

14 Look after less experienced crewmembers. This includes both helping to keep them safe and enabling them to become more useful members of the team. It's worth using some of the time when you're sat on the rail to talk through manoeuvres and so on with the person next to you.

15 If you want a head start in an overseas regatta, consider booking with a UK-based company such as Island Charters, Cowes Race School or Performance Yacht Charter. Plan in advance and this may give you the chance to race the boat and get to know it at an event closer to home, before racing in more exotic locations. ▣

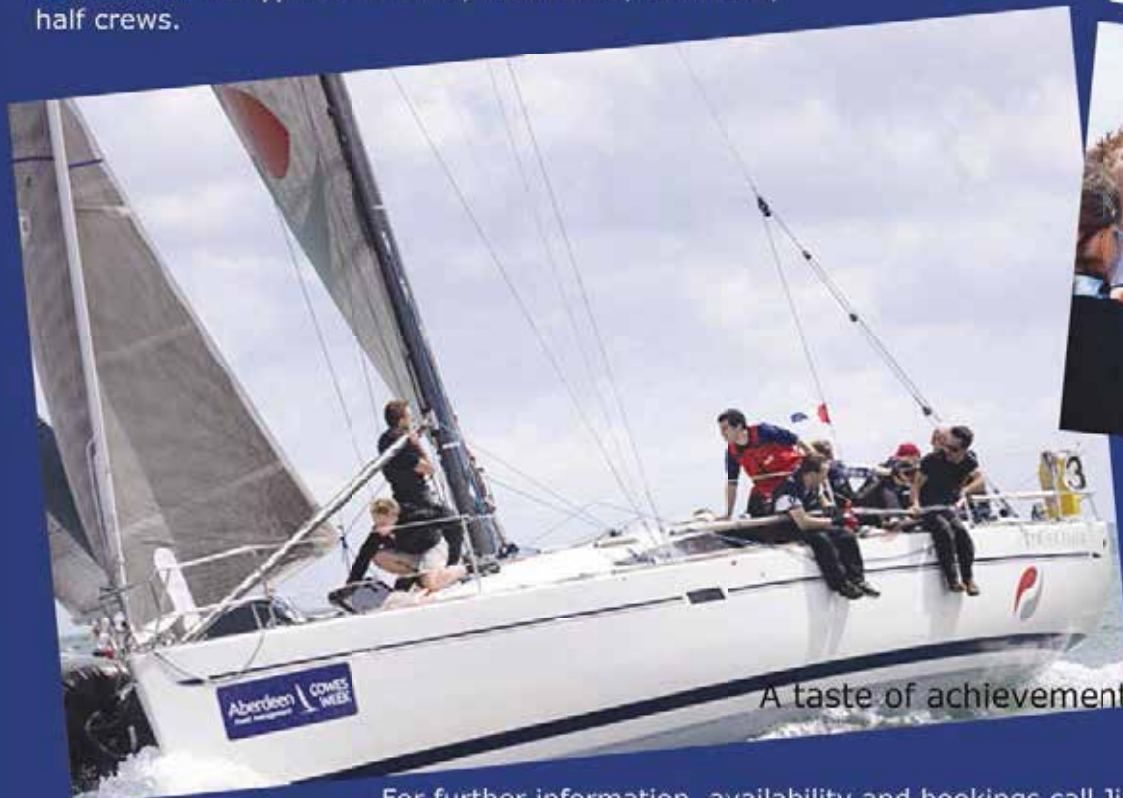
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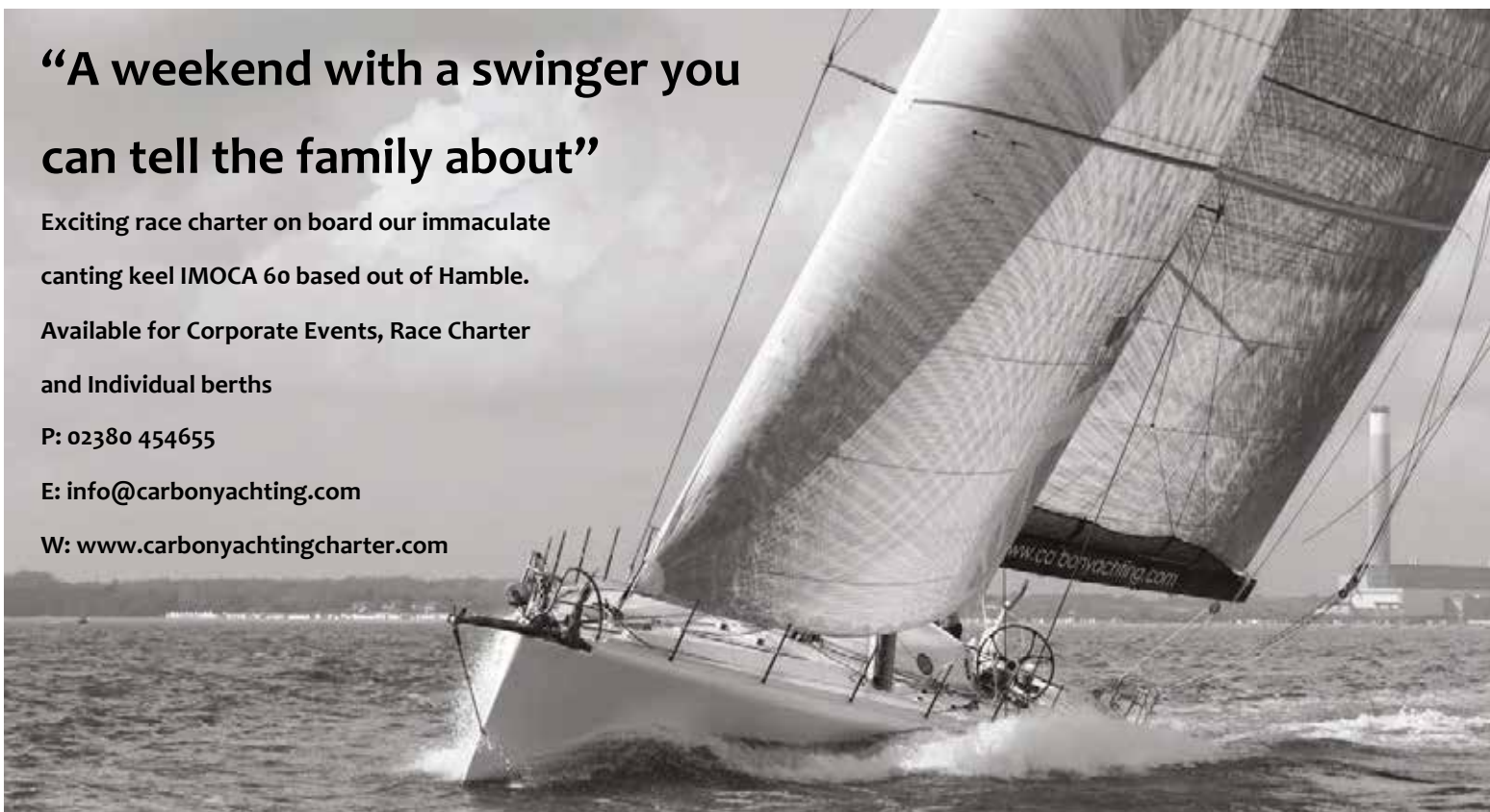
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CLUBS & CLASSES

The winter season has been drawing to a close with many traveller series and iconic events providing the dual challenge of competitive racing and extreme conditions. **Paula Irish** reports



PHOTO: CHRISTOPHE FAVREAU

Gotta Love It 7 wins JJ Giltinan

Gotta Love It 7's team of Seve Jarvin, Sam Newton and Scott Babbage became the JJ Giltinan 18ft Skiff champions with a day to spare on Sydney Harbour – making Seve the most-capped skipper and competitor in the championship's 76-year history.

Jarvin originally crewed with Euan McNicol on Club Marine in 2005 and has since skippered seven Gotta Love It 7 skiffs to championship victory.

Despite already having secured the win, Gotta Love It 7 showed her real quality by winning the final day's race by 2 minutes 15 seconds, to count five race wins and a second from the seven-race series.

The race was vital for the next four teams overall, with only eight points separating them.

Thurlow Fisher Lawyers (Michael Coxon, Trent Barnabas, Dave

O'Connor) gained a substantial lead over nearest rival Mojo Wine (Lee Knapton) to take second overall, while US champion Howie Hamlin – winner of the Giltinan title in 2002 and 2003 and sailing this event with Dan Phillips and Skip McCormack – produced another good result to finish third overall. Asko Appliances (Marcus Ashley-Jones) took fourth spot ahead of Mojo Wine.

Blithfield Barrel finale proves a light airs affair

Despite a dire forecast, the series already having been decided, and the Solo Winter Champs the day before, 43 boats made the trip for the final round of the Blithfield Barrel.

Chris Gould and Nick Broomhall in their Osprey had already taken

the Barrel after week three – a feat believed to be a first.

The series, sponsored by English Braids and Freedom brewery, saw a total of 100 boats competing in at least one race and overall was dominated by extreme conditions,

concluding in a particularly light airs finale. The Merlin of Matt Biggs and John Hackett took the final bullet of the series, enough to give them second overall on countback above fellow Merlin sailors, Andy Davis and Ian Smith, in third.

J/24 Midwinters

Will Welles added the J/24 Midwinter Championship to his trophy case, which also holds the J/24 US National Championship and J/24 World Championship, racing *Cougar* with Chris Morgan, Monica Morgan, Jeff Linton and Erik Rexford, at Davis Island YC in Tampa, Florida.

Solo Winter Championship

The Solo Winter Championship at Chew Valley Lake SC attracted 56 entries, and a Force 2 with many holes in the wind meant the first race came down to skill and experience. Dave Mitchell took the bullet, making the wiley old veteran a happy bunny, ahead of Kevan Gibb in second and Andy Davis in third. With not much wind and still very shifty conditions for race two, it was a win for Veteran Stuart Hydon with Davis second this time – and now in the overall lead – with Hayling Island's Pete Mitchell third. But Pete then took the final bullet of the day to take the overall win on countback from Blithfield's Davis, who'd finished the race in second to also count four points. Northampton's Oli Wells finished the final race in third place for third overall.

PHOTO: STEPHANIE MCCORMICK



34th Grafham Grand Prix

The 34th Grafham Grand Prix, postponed from its customary date in December, was finally sailed in cold and blustery conditions that, thankfully, never quite matched the gloom and doom predicted in the weather forecast.

A total of 95 boats defied the horrible forecast to compete at Grafham Water SC, with three races for each fleet, and the wind building from 12-15mph at the outset to a much more demanding 20-25mph by the end of proceedings.

It was the concluding event of the GJW Direct Sailjuice Winter Series and for the overall series prize, Nick Craig and Oli Wells couldn't be caught in their Merlin Rocket.

Even so, Craig and Wells came to do battle in the finale in the Medium handicap fleet. They were best of the Merlins, but Fireballs again proved dominant in the strong breeze, with Ian Dobson and Dan Schieber winning the division counting two firsts and discarding a second. That said, Contender sailor Stuart Jones did win the final race for second overall, relegating Fireball World Champions, Christian Birrell and Sam Brearey, to third overall.

In the asymmetric fleet, local man Tim Saxton, sailing with Fiona Hampshire, won two races and discarded a second to beat fellow RS800 team Ralph and Sophie Singleton, with Roger Gilbert and Ben McGrane racing their SK2 to third overall. In the slow handicap division, Craig Williamson won the first two heats in his Laser and discarded a ninth in the windier final race. Rhiannon Massey took the final race in her Laser Radial, placing her second overall ahead of Jamie Lea in a Solo.

Highcliffe Icicle Series kick-starts 2015

Highcliffe SC kick-started 2015 with its Icicle Series, which comprised eight harbour races and tested 45 entrants over a range of conditions, including a windy finale with orange and purples on Windguru providing exciting conditions.

Christchurch's Jack Arnell took his fifth bullet of the series then had to retire with a snapped tiller extension from the final race – which had just eight

boats braving the increasingly wild conditions – leaving fellow Christchurch Finn sailor Ray New to take the final bullet for second overall. Despite his enforced retirement, Arnell was the overall series winner while Simon Moss and Roddy Steel, both from Keyhaven and also in Finns, finished third and fourth. First for Highcliffe was Solo sailor Steve Waite in fifth overall.

Golden hat-trick for Brits in Miami

Luke Patience and Elliot Willis ensured that their first ISAF Sailing World Cup medal as a team was a golden one – taking the British Sailing Team's medal tally to three gold and five silver medals at the season-opening regatta in Miami.

The 470 European Champions, who teamed up 11 months ago, sailed an impressive opening series to guarantee themselves a podium finish, and a good chance of gold with a 15 point advantage over the Australian World Champions, Mat Belcher/Will Ryan, heading into the double points medal race.

A seventh-place finish in the race to the Australians' third was more than enough for the Brits to wrap up the victory.

"Man, we're so happy," declared 2012 Olympic silver medallist Patience. "We were really hungry for this – what can I say? It's pretty cool to be wearing the yellow jerseys for most of the week and finish the job off on the last day. We're really chuffed."

Double world champion Willis added: "The Australians

are undoubtedly the dominant force in the 470 fleet and have been for quite some time. It's great to go head-to-head with them in a regatta and come out on top."

Gold medals also went to Finn sailor Giles Scott – with an impressive winning margin of 25 points – and windsurfer Bryony Shaw.

Rickham/Niki Birrell.

The RYA's Olympic manager Stephen Park said it had been a tricky week with a full range of conditions: "There have been some unusual offshore winds, and very shifty too, resulting in some significant place changes throughout all the fleets all week.



PHOTO: OCEAN IMAGES/BRITISH SAILING TEAM

Silver medals went to Laser sailor Nick Thompson, Ben Saxton/Nicola Groves in the Nacra 17 and Hannah Mills/Saskia Clark in the 470 women's event, and in the Paralympic classes to 2.4mR sailor Megan Pascoe and SKUD 18 team Alexandra

"The good news from a British team perspective is that we had people fighting it out not just for medals, but for golds in the majority of classes during the course of the week, and to come away with eight medals at this stage is a good place to be."



Quantum Key West

Howling winds and rough seas on the final day at Quantum Key West Race Week challenged the top contenders to raise their game in order to claim overall victory.

Bella Mente, the Judel-Vrolijk 72-footer Mini Maxi skippered by Hap Fauth of Minneapolis, took first place in both final races to hold off a stiff challenge from skipper Gunther Buerman and his team on *Numbers*, including four-time America's Cup winner Brad Butterworth aboard as tactician.

Veteran professional Terry Hutchinson, recently named Rolex Yachtsman of the Year for the second time in his career, an executive with Quantum Sail Design Group and a relative newcomer to the *Bella Mente* programme, said: "The one constant we had all week was superb starting and tremendous boat handling. Every member of the crew really did a great job."

In the GC32 catamarans skipper Flavio Marazzi led the Swiss entry, *Armin Strom Sailing*, to victory, while supremacy in the Melges 32 class went to Alec Cutler and his crew on *Hedgehog*, with Canadian Olympian Richard Clarke calling tactics and Britain's Adrian Stead aboard as strategist.

It was the first regatta for Ker 51 *Tonnerre 4*

under the ownership of Peter Vroon, with the Dutch entry leading the IRC 1 class for the final four days, while the J/70 was the largest class with 54 boats and a slew of top professionals.

A week-long dog fight ultimately saw skipper Carlo Alberini and his Italian team on *Calvi Network* emerging as the overall winner with single-digit finishes in nine of 11 races. This remarkable consistency in such a competitive class earned *Calvi Network* the ultimate prize at Quantum Key West Race Week – Boat of the Week.

Irish skipper Conor Clarke competed in Key West for the first time and his team came away with an impressive victory in the Melges 24 class aboard *Embarrr*, and the J/88 class was won by Rob and Sandy Butler sailing Canadian entry *Touch2Play Racing*.

J/111 victory went to Florida skipper George Gamble steering *My Sharona* with Quantum pro Scott Nixon calling tactics, while British skipper Joe Woods and his crew on *Red* set the pace in PHRF 1 from the outset, with Dave Lenz serving as tactician aboard the Farr 280.

Securing his third class victory at Key West was Gerry Taylor, steering Cape Fear 38 *Tangent* to win every race but one in PHRF 2.

Toppers turn up the heat at Winter Regatta

Over 160 sailors braved sub-zero temperatures and some strong winds at Weymouth and Portland National Sailing Academy to participate in the ITCA GBR Topper Winter Regatta sponsored by Magic Marine.

In the 5.3 fleet, competition for line honours was particularly fierce with Ewan Gribbin of Paignton SC and Niamh Harper of Loch Tummel SC both winning three races each from



the five-race series – with Ewan Gribbin taking the overall win by the narrowest of margins.

Dylan Walendy-Wrigley from Harwich Town SC finished third overall ahead of Victoria Cowan (Portchester) and Joseph Drake (Royal Norfolk & Suffolk).

On the 4.2 Topper course, 21 boats helmed by sailors aged from 10 to 13 years, sailed five highly competitive races, the fleet being sponsored by Sailing Solutions and Magic Marine.

First overall was Sam Jones (Hill Head) with Coco Barrett (Desborough/Queen Mary) second overall ahead of Toby Pearce (Horning) in third.

21st Warwick Turtle

The 21st annual Warwick Turtle team racing event fittingly welcomed 21 student teams from around the country at Draycote Water SC.

The report from the first

event in 1995 told how the meeting was 'battered by the winter gales yet still proved a successful and rewarding weekend for competitors and organisers alike'.

The latest University of Warwick Sailing Club event likewise saw the wind gods sending along some intense breeze to get the proceedings started and a great weekend for all involved.

The teams cleared 47 races before the end of the first

day and with perfect team racing weather on day two, there was a push to get in as many races as possible.

The final saw Cambridge taking the win over Southampton Pink, to be crowned UWSC Turtle Champions 2015.

Three Tiger Bullets for Birrell and Brearey

Fireball World Champions Christian Birrell and Sam Brearey took victory at a super-windy John Merricks Tiger Trophy at Rutland.

The penultimate event in the GJW Direct SailJuice Winter Series (also supported by Gul, Trident, Overboard and Lennon Sails) attracted 118 entries, and with a forecast of 20 to 30 knot cold north-westerlies, the weekend was a war of attrition.

Birrell and Brearey won two of the three handicap races on the Saturday, and Sunday's pursuit race. The first race saw them revelling in 18-22 knots, with occasional gusts of 25, along with Rob Jones, whose Blaze finished top of the slow handicap division.

The breeze picked up even more for race two, with just 44 finishers, and with another Fireball sailed by Ian Dobson and Ben Ainsworth taking the win this time.

Race three saw just 48 boats starting and only 38 finishers.



PHOTO: TIM OLIN

Birrell had retired in race two but was back for race three, winning again after a tussle with the other Fireballs, and the 29er of Crispin Beaumont and Tom Darling, who were mixing it with the 505s and Fireballs all day.

On Sunday, Birrell and Brearey won the John Merricks Pursuit Trophy and with it the overall title of Tiger Trophy victors. Dobson and Ainsworth

were second overall, with Fireballs taking five of the top six places - Dave Wade/William Alloway in third and Dave Hall/Paul Constable fourth. Rob Jones was fifth in his Blaze while Katie Davies and Grace Summers won the women's prize, finishing 11th in their 420. Ross Thompson and Ben Shorrock won the Junior Trophy, finishing 46th in their 420.

Black flag start decides 29er Winters

The Noble Marine 29er Winter Championship saw 40 teams at Draycote Water SC for a weekend of light and shifty but also sunny conditions.

Tom Methven and Rob Lloyd (Plymouth Youth) took the first bullet but coach Phil Walker

and John Mather (Draycote Water) showed the younger sailors the way overall with a 4, 1 to take the overnight lead ahead of fellow locals, Rob and Emma Loveridge.

Day two opened with conditions much the same, with

race wins going to Walker/Mather and Matt Venables/Will Alloway (Rutland).

A tricky race five allowed a win for Abigail Croft and Jennifer Cant (Queen Mary/Leigh & Lowton) before a steady 10 knots in race six, with plenty of gusts to provide extra pace downwind for those who spotted them.

Methven/Lloyd, who had been clear ahead on the leaderboard alongside Walker/Mather, were black flagged, and so Walker/Mather took the overall win, with the Loveridges showing consistency is key to finish third overall, despite posting no top three results.

Venables/Alloway took the final bullet to pull up to fourth overall, just a point ahead of Chichester's Vikki Payne and Stephi Orton, who took the ladies' title.



PHOTO: MALCOLM LEWIN PHOTOGRAPHY

Vernon Stratton Trophy

15 Illusion sailors competed for the Vernon Stratton Trophy at Bembridge, with a bitterly cold ENE Force 4 on day one followed by much kinder, and certainly warmer conditions on day two, although no less challenging as the Force 2-3 breeze flicked from NNE to NNW as racing progressed.

Overall victory went to Mark Downer counting 10 points from the six races sailed after a discard, with Julia Bailey second overall on 16 points, just one ahead of Rupert Holmes in third.

Forthcoming events

- **30 March – 5 April**
BVI Spring Regatta
- **3 April**
Commodores' Cup & Cook Salver Races to St Malo, Royal Channel Islands YC
SailRacer Round Hayling Windsurfing Race, Hayling Island SC
- **3-4 April**
Cadet, World team selector, Rutland SC
Easter Egg, Waldringfield SC
Optimists, Grafham Easter Egg, Grafham Water SC
- **3-5 April**
Monohull dinghies/multihulls Easter Chase, Rock Sailing and Waterski Club
- **4-5 April**
Flying Fifteen Inland Championship, Bewl Valley SC
Easter Regatta, Bala SC
- **4-6 April**
Easter Regatta, Ullswater YC
- **6 April**
Easter Open Pursuit Race, Hayling Island SC
- **11 April**
Mini Transat, Lorient BSM, France
6-Hour Race, Sutton-in-Ashfield SC
- **11-12 April**
OK Inland Championship, Grafham Water SC
- **18-19 April**
Osprey Inland Championship, Blithfield SC
Wayfarer Easterns, Waldringfield SC
- **18-22 April**
Mini Transat, Pornichet Select, France
- **20-26 April**
Olympic classes, ISAF Sailing World Cup #2, Hyères, France
- **25-26 April**
Spring Regatta, Royal Channel Islands YC
- **25 April – 1 May**
Antigua Sailing Week

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SAILORS

of the month



YOUNG SAILOR OF THE MONTH

A cold and breezy John Merricks Tiger Trophy at Rutland Sailing Club saw only the most determined sailors battling for honours – including 12-year old Jack Berry.

Jack, from the Royal Hospital School in Ipswich, was awarded funding by the John Merricks Sailing Trust in October to buy a nearly-new Topper. And at the Tiger Trophy in some harsh conditions, he duly did both himself and the Trust proud, earning a nomination from regatta organiser, Dick Sanders, to become our Young Sailor of the Month. Dick says: “Jack finished the first race in 69th place, second to last finisher, with 50 DNFs in race one. Following repairs in race two he missed the start of race three by five minutes. He still sailed the course and was last off the water. First on, last off.

“Jack also finished the pursuit race as well, ahead of the only other Topper competing. Organisers gave him a North Sails guide to tactics and sail trim in recognition of his perseverance when only half the fleet finished.”

His brother Elliot, aged 14, also from Alton Water and sailing a Topper, equally demonstrated true grit in the tough conditions, which saw off many of the 118 entries, winning the Gul spot prize for 47th place. His impressive performance, sailing off a handicap of 1300, gave Elliot a 62nd discard in race one, and a 44th and 38th in races two and three.

Half the money from entries to the Tiger Trophy, sponsored by Everards Brewery, goes to the JMST, as well as profits from the Tiger dinner and auction on the Saturday night.

John Merricks won the inaugural Rutland Tiger Trophy in 1994, the regatta being renamed in his honour following his untimely death. With support – including from Tony Everard, a Rutland SC member who gave John his first chance by buying him a 420 – the 1996 Olympic 470 silver medallist was able to fulfil his ambitions and demonstrate his talent for sailing. The JMST seeks to help other young sailors achieve their goals.

Nominate a sailor of the month

Each issue will honour the achievements of non-professional adult and youth sailors. To nominate, go to yachtsandyachting.co.uk/sailor-of-the-month

SAILOR OF THE MONTH

Our Sailor of the Month is Jon Senior in recognition of a decade of dedication to the sport at Datchet Water Sailing Club.

A Nacra Inter 20 sailor, Jon is a leading coxswain at Datchet – earning the club’s Coxn of the Year trophy more than once – and has played a pivotal role in supporting events and the sailing committee at the club.

Jon was nominated by club commodore Phil Tinsley, who says: “Jon has been a member for only 10 years but has been a driving force in the club ever since. He’s a flamboyant cat sailor, cat fleet organiser, tireless safety coxswain and event manager, and has held the sailing committee together for a number of years. He’s again set to be awarded ‘Coxn of the Year’ and has been club member of the year, too. He’s just qualified as a powerboat instructor and also runs a Scout group. We are very lucky to have him with us. Every club should have a Jon Senior!”

“A club member for 10 years, Jon has been a driving force ever since”



Race boats

ON THE WATER

Our pick of the pedigree race boats for sale from private sellers and brokerages

FARR 52 *CHERNIKEEFF 2* | £100,000



To many sailors the sight of *Chernikeeff 2* and sister-ship, *Bear of Britain* battling it out at various Solent events will be an image permanently etched into memories.

In the early 2000s they were two of the hottest race teams, certainly in UK circles and were regularly at the very top of the biggest regattas on the calendar.

Times move on, of course, and as new

classes come to the fore, the Farr 52 is no longer the jaw-dropping, high performance weapon she once was. But she is still a potent bit of kit and a proven IRC racer. Not only that but, as is always the case with professionally campaigned boats, she comes with a list of spares and kit as long as your arm.

Chernikeeff 2 remains a step-on-and-win boat, but her almost total lack of creature

comforts below means she is on the market for the relatively affordable price of £100,000, plenty of bang for your buck.

Contact: Berthon - 01590 679222

LOA 15.85m
Beam 4.39m
Draft 3.25m
Year 2001

J/80 | £22,500

This lightly-used sail training J/80 has been in Portsmouth Harbour since launch and looks to be in excellent condition throughout. She has both an asymmetric and conventional spinnaker and has been used for occasional local racing with instructors and clients.

She has a full inventory of North sails, comes with an array of Tacktick instruments and a 3.5hp engine to get you to, or from, the startline. She can be delivered by the owners and comes with a road trailer.

The J/80 remains one of the biggest small keelboat classes in the world, with over 1,600 boats in more than 15 countries and provides close tactical racing – all for relatively small amounts of money. Support from J/Boats is second-to-none and it is easy to find like minded owners throughout the UK.

Contact: Jannine - 02392 553303

LOA 8.0m
LWL 6.71m
Beam 2.51m
Draft 1.49m



ONE-OFF MOTH | £10,000

The sum of £10,000 is always going to seem a lot of money for a second-hand 11ft dinghy but in truth this International Moth is probably one of the biggest bargains on the market at the moment.

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is a hybrid of the Ninja/Exocet designs. She has been designed to promote good low-riding and incorporate a sleek profile for reduced windage when in flight.

Her owner, Phil Oligario, explains she is solid with all of the reinforcement in the right places and has not had a single

breakage to date, with all regattas completed and no DNFs on her record – impressive in this class! Contact: Phil - phil@i44.co.uk

LOA 3.35m
Beam 2.25m
Sail area 8.25sq m
Year 2012

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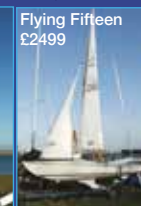
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PHOTO: PETER MARSHALL

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“Old Tina Turner videos make for a good off-season training tool”

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Jethou...6th
ORC World Championship
Class A
Enfant Terrible...1st
Class B
Forte...1st
Class C
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IRC 1
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IRC 0
Bella Mente...2nd*
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Ran...2nd
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Swan 60
Bronenosec...1st
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Windward...3rd

ORC 1
Rats on Fire...1st
Earlybird...2nd
Elena Nova...3rd
ORC 2
Movistar...1st
X35
Lelagain...1st
Puerto Deportivo
Benalmadena...2nd
Red Electrica de Espana...3rd
Palma Vela
Mini Maxis
Ran 5...1st
Robertissima III...2nd
Alegre...3rd
Jethou...4th
Wild Joe...5th
Commodores Cup
Winning Team
Ireland...1st
Antix, Catapult, Quokka 8
Cowes Week
Black Group/Overall
Yes...1st
IRC 0
Cape Fling...1st
IRC 2
Yes...1st
IRC 3
Puma Logic...1st
IRC 4
Strait Dealer...1st
IRC 5
ETB Tyres...1st
IRC 6
Whooper...1st
IRC 7
Madelaine...1st
J/109
Inspira...1st
XOD
Lass...1st

Dragon
Jerboa...1st
Etchells
China White...1st
First 40
La Response...1st*
First 40.7
Incognito...1st
Quarter Ton
Bullit...1st
J/Cup
J/109
Jahmali...1st
Jubilee...2nd
Tigh Soluis...3rd
J/111
Journeymaker...2nd
Jitterbug...3rd*
J/97
Just Like That...1st
Indulgence...2nd
Jaslan...3rd
IRC 1
Kaya - J/122...1st
Assarain V - J/133...2nd
Jump - J/133...3rd
IRC 2
Jongleur - J/88...1st
Who's to Know - J/92...2nd*
Quarter Ton Cup
Bullit...1st
Alice II...2nd
Illegal Immigrant...3rd
Aguila...4th
Illes Pitiuses...5th
Blackfun...6th
Espada...7th
Whiskers...8th*
Cote...9th
Penguin Playboy...10th
Round Ireland Race
Tanit - BH36...1st
Ruth...2nd
Inis Mor...3rd

J/109 Irish Nationals
Jelly Baby...1st
Joker II...2nd
Jedi...3rd
ICRA Irish Nationals
IRC
Jump Juice...1st
IRC 1
Jelly Baby...1st
IRC 2
Checkmate XV...1st
IRC 3
Quest...1st
ISORA Overall Series
Ruth...1st
Mojito...2nd
Sgrech...3rd
Panerai Classic Regatta
Soufriere...1st
MMD Spring Series
Class 0 IRC
Freya...1st
Godot...2nd
Volvo Cork Week
IRC 1/Overall
Catapult...1st
IRC 2
Quokka 8...1st
IRC 3
Storm...1st
IRC 4
Insatiable...1st
IRC 5
Illes Pitiuses...1st
Harbour Race
Quokka 8...1st
Antix...2nd
Catapult...3rd
WIORA
IRC 1/Overall
Now What...1st

Antigua Race Week/Overall
Tonnere...1st
RORC
IRC/Overall
Tonnere...1st
IRC 3
Raging Bee...1st

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ABOVE: 2014 Mini Maxi World Championship winner *Alegre* powers upwind with her 3Di 870 jib and 3Di 870 Raw mainsail. Jesús Renedo photo.